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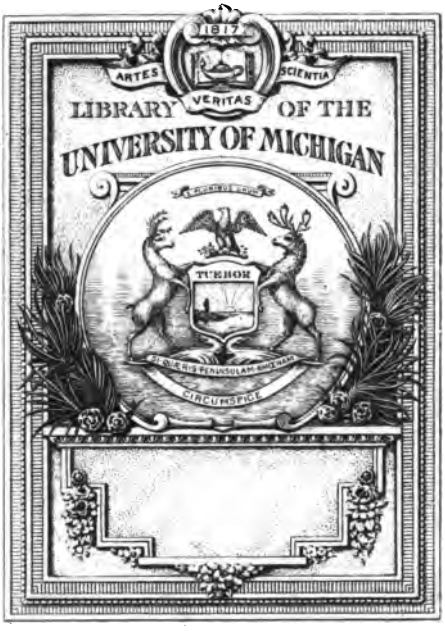
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The Editor of The Examiner

CATHARINE DOUGLAS.

A TRAGEDY.

By [illegible]

LONDON:
WILLIAM PICKERING.
1843.

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DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

KING JAMES THE FIRST OF SCOTLAND.
THE EARL OF ATHOL, *Uncle to the King.*
SIR ROBERT STEWART, *Grandson to the Earl of Athol, and Chamberlain to the King.*
SIR JOHN STEWART, *a Cousin of the King's.*
THE EARLS OF DOUGLAS *and* ANGUS; *the* BISHOP OF GLASGOW, SIR WALTER OGILVY, *and other Scotch Nobles and Councillors.*
SIR ROBERT GRAHAME.
WALTER LINDSAY.
RICHARD CAMERON.
PAUL CRAWAR, *a Bohemian physician, sent into Scotland by the Reformers of Prague.*
LOWRY LUTAR, ADAM CUMMIN, CUTHBERT MACKAY, ANDREW SIPPET, *and other Citizens of Edinburgh.*
SHAMUS, *Sir Robert Grahame's servant.*

THE QUEEN OF JAMES.
CATHARINE DOUGLAS, EUPHEMIA DOUGLAS } *Maids of Honour.*
MAULD, *an old Highland woman.*

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CATHARINE DOUGLAS.

ACT I. Scene I.

Street in Edinburgh.

Enter Andrew Sippet, Adam Cummin, Lowry Lutar, Cuthbert Mackay, *and other Citizens.*

ANDREW SIPPET.

DON'T tell me, neighbour; don't I know a heretic when I see him? He must have horns and hoofs, and every thing conformable.

ADAM CUMMIN.

Horns and hoofs! no more than you have, not so many maybe. Pooh! I mind John Resby's being burnt when your beard was a downy little baby: he was a proper man I warrant you, as

ever was hanged—and they're always the properest men you know.

ANDREW SIPPET.

Then there was no priest by him, or you'd soon have seen his true badges.

ADAM CUMMIN.

Aye, but there was though, a whole line of 'em, an' if 'twere not a sin to say so, an ugly set of fellows they looked by his side. Now this Paul Craw, we're a hunting, looks as grand with his white hair, d'ye see, as if he were a bishop. I saw him once when he was walking with young Master Lindsay. But, Lord, there's no telling anything by a man's looks.

LOWRY LUTAR.

That's right, Adam, speak up for thy own snub-nose. Take comfort, man: I say too that all the mischief in the world was not done by snub-noses—there was some which they got others to do for them.

ADAM CUMMIN.

You're always at your gibes, master Lowry;

but I say that no man's good looks go for much with me. Why Sweeny Adams, the baker in our street, whom the devil put it into his head to kill his wife—

LOWRY LUTAR.

No—no—not the devil; 'twould do the foul fiend no good, man, to put it into any body's head to kill his wife. Who'd there be left then to make the good man curse and swear?

ADAM CUMMIN.

Well, have it as you list, but Sweeny Adams—

[*Cries of "There he goes"—"Have at him!" Exeunt all but Lowry Lutar and Cuthbert Mackay.*

CUTHBERT MACKAY.

It's no good running much. The more you run, the more good luck runs away too. That's a sweet pretty game where one opens one's mouth, and shuts one's eyes, and waits to see what'll happen. Now we're just as like to catch Master Craw, as any of those chiels who are kicking up their heels after him. Maybe he'd come down this very street now.

LOWRY LUTAR.

Oh yes, running is a very young trick. Men of any wisdom take the world easily—indeed, there's nothing in it worth being thin about—and so wise men become capacious, and can't run. Did you hear that Adam Cummin? What a goose he is to go and say that a man's good looks go for nothing—he and his Sweeny Adams that he's always bringing up. Why I'd rather believe now in the way in which a man puts his legs to the ground than in all the fine speeches he could make. Did you ever know a hypocrite that hadn't a canting, slippery, don't-look-at-me-I'm-so-good, sort of a walk with him? And as for faces, why a face is a true sign post. If a man is a dragon, he looks it, to be sure.

CUTHBERT MACKAY.

Why, of a truth, master Lowry, do you believe in faces?

LOWRY LUTAR.

Why, of a truth, master Cuthbert, do you believe in words? Now when I served the Douglas, many's the time I used to see Albany,

the Governor. I warrant you I knew what a deep one 'a was from the first. I felt he was looking at me, when he wasn't looking at me, d'ye see? King Jamie hadn't much chance of coming back while the old Albany lived.

CUTHBERT MACKAY.

Well what should you say of King Jamie himself now, since you are so feature-wise, master?

LOWRY LUTAR.

Why, I'll tell you. I shouldn't much like to be one of the great lords, and to have fed my pigs on the royal acorns at any time—No—not even by mistake. And I should like it the less, Master Cuthbert, the more the king smiled upon me. That smile of his closes up as suddenly as an April sky. But otherwise he looks a goodish sort of a man.

CUTHBERT MACKAY.

He has always a good word for the like of us. [*Shouting in the distance*] They've caught Paul Craw as sure as I'm alive.

[*Exit Cuthbert Mackay.*

LOWRY LUTAR.

Not so very sure either. A man whose wits are always asleep when he's not eating—I'm not so sure that he is alive. But that's the English blood in him. It takes five generations at least to get their beef-eating ways out of a family. More's the pity. [*Exit Lowry Lutar.*

SCENE II.

A Room in a House at Edinburgh.

PAUL CRAWAR *asleep*—WALTER LINDSAY *listening at the window.*

WALTER LINDSAY.

I THINK they're gone—the accursed bloodhounds!
[*He walks toward Paul Crawar.*
My poor dear master, this is thy reward!
[*Shouting in the street.*
Again, you foolish beasts—did you but know
The man you're hunting down, e'en you would say,

Not all the priests that drive your grovelling selves
Were worth his life—but thus it always has been.
Through the dread labyrinth of human error
One track alone leads rightly, marked in blood—
A narrow stream of blood by martyrs shed
E'en from the first of times—that is the clue.

[*He returns to the window.*

Oh God,
How awful is thy silence at these things!
Thou seest man make his brother man a slave,
A slave in body, slave in soul—and still
Thy lightnings play upon some blasted heath,
Or strike the forest lord, that is no tyrant—
Thy ways, not ours.—How lovely looks the night,
As if for some great festival bedecked,
With all her jewels in her ebon hair!
Beneath a canopy like this it were
A double sin for evil to be done:
Kings have their palace laws, to save from blood
Those cherished walls, but here the stain is naught,
Here, in this temple of the universe—
Ye beauteous stars whose mystic weavings show

Perchance, the wondrous story of all time,
Past, present, and to come—tell me, bright orbs,
Are these oppressions in your chronicle,
And must they be? must—

[*A gentle knock at the door, Lindsay opens it, and* RICHARD CAMERON *enters.*

RICHARD CAMERON.

They're less alert—but this is no safe refuge:
Some said he had been seen with Walter Lindsay,
The fools have nearly killed two poor old men
They took for Paul. Awake him now.

WALTER LINDSAY.

And, Richard, this it is
That wisdom comes to.

RICHARD CAMERON.

No—no—I say, not wisdom,
But striving to make others wise—and death
By furious mobs is the fit punishment
For such a crime against that majesty
Which here on earth full oft encircles error.
But I am prating like the rest.

[*Cameron touches Paul Crawar.*

Up, friend.

PAUL CRAWAR.

What, evening come! how could I stay so long,
And, heedless, thus endanger thee, dear Walter?
Farewell, good youths,—farewell: if that I perish,
Continue still to pass the torch of truth
From hand to hand; and let the brethren know
I perished joyfully. [*Exit Paul Crawar.*

WALTER LINDSAY.

I'll after him.

RICHARD CAMERON.

'Tis useless risk.

WALTER LINDSAY.

Not so.

[*Exit Lindsay.*

RICHARD CAMERON.

Youth leading childhood! for that good old man
Is almost less proficient than our Walter
In that great art which growing years bestow,
The art to keep one's body and one's soul
Well knit together, and securing too,
For that intent, much share of provender
Not of the worst—

The sum of worldly wisdom, as I take it.

[*Shouting in the street—Cameron rushes to the window.*

'Tis he—they have him now—Walter escapes—
Hither he must not come, I'll run to warn him.

[*Exit.*

SCENE III.

Council Chamber in the Palace of Holyrood.

Enter KING JAMES, *the* EARL OF MAR, SIR THOMAS STEWART, *the* BISHOP OF GLASGOW, SIR WALTER OGILVY, SIR JOHN FORESTER, SIR ROBERT LAUDER, *and* ALEXANDER LIVINGSTON.

KING JAMES.

SAY on—how was it?

SIR WALTER OGILVY.

The Earl with fire and sword
Laid waste Sir Robert's lands—and in the while
The Highland kernes poured down upon his own.
Throughout the sheriffdom 'tis all one desert.

KING JAMES.

Whence comes their feud?

OGILVY.

My Liege, Sir Robert and the Earl both claimed
The right of turf upon the moss of Dragsmuir:
The value naught, 'tis an old feud.

KING JAMES.

I thought so—had the thing been worth five pounds,
They might have honoured our poor jurisdiction;
But as their claim was all but valueless,
They only staked five hundred lives upon it,
And all the produce of their territory.
And these lords pass for sane—Come hither, Mar,
Here is our signet, raise what power you can,
And bring me both these fools: and mark you, sir,
They need no special courtesy, these men,—
Whoever puts himself above the law,
Treat him as you would the common enemy,
He is such. [*Exit the Earl of Mar.*

BISHOP OF GLASGOW.

We need your warrant, good my Liege, to execute
His doom on that arch-heretic, Crawar.

KING JAMES.

The egregious fool!
As if we had not turbulence enough,
But this Bohemian must disturb the state
With his self-taught conceits, and poverty
Of worship. [*The King writes.*
But stay, is't fully proved?

BISHOP OF GLASGOW.

Here are his words, my Liege, set down in order.
Just as he uttered them.

[*The Bishop gives the King a scroll.*

KING JAMES.

" That Purgatory is a poet's fable—
" The papal sway an odious usurpation—

BISHOP OF GLASGOW.

That was his very blasphemy.

KING JAMES.

" That scripture should be read in every part
" By all who list, as any other book—

BISHOP OF GLASGOW.

I pray you read, my Liege, there's more.

KING JAMES.

Enough— [*He gives the Bishop the warrant.*
And now, my Lords, we shall not need to-day
Your further aid.

[*The Lords of the Council are going out.*

KING JAMES.

Here, Livingston— [*Livingston returns.*
How goes it in my cause with George of March?
Have all his advocates been heard to day?

ALEXANDER LIVINGSTON.

They have, my Liege.

KING JAMES.

When will the judgment come?

ALEXANDER LIVINGSTON.

To-morrow, as I hear—I scarce can doubt
But that the justice of your cause, my Liege,
Will meet a reverent hearing from your Parliament.

KING JAMES.

You may withdraw— [*Exit Livingston.*
Let them say what they will,
This Parliament! I'll have no Earls of March

To let the flood of English in upon me,
Whene'er it suits his humour—why the man
Who holds that pass is three parts king—no—no,
No Earl of March for me. [*Exit.*

SCENE IV.

A desolate Moorland.

Enter WALTER LINDSAY *and* RICHARD CAMERON.

LINDSAY.

THIS dreary scene!

CAMERON.

I love it, for it speaks to me
In deeper tones than many a corn-fed ridge,
Or fertile vale—That wide extent of waste,
Naught but dark, stagnant, pools of withering rushes—
This yielding soil, the ruins of past centuries—
How like the state of fallen man, how eloquent
In grief!

LINDSAY.

I do not question of its sadness.

CAMERON.

Aye, Walter, but there's more infinity
In sadness than in joy. But who comes yonder?
Thy gentle mistress—Ah, how true to time
You lovers are! the nicest horologe
Beats not so faithfully as your fond hearts.
Now there's a prettiness for you.

Enter CATHARINE *and* EUPHEMIA DOUGLAS.

LINDSAY [*to Catharine*].

Dearest! [*They walk apart.*

CAMERON.

Well, Mistress Effie, rather dull work this waiting upon lovers, that you and I do so much of—a sort of turnspit duty.

EUPHEMIA DOUGLAS.

Turnspit duty! well, I would have found a better-bred simile than that; but yours have mostly a prison air about them. Very witty things at a highwayman's feast, I do not doubt, Master Richard.

CAMERON.

Nay then: have another sort. As when the bright sun and the plaintive moon—no, not moon —queen of night—As when the bright sun and the plaintive queen of night are in conjunction, two little stars, far apart, twinkling at each other, sigh and say "Ah, why are our hearts too not attuned to love?" That now is a court simile—The king sings such things by the hundred, tweedle de de de dum, tweedle de de de dee; and grave officers of state try to look unutterably at each other; and all the ladies cry as much as can be done judiciously—without any disarrangement, you understand. Oh! I'm your man for a court simile, only I thought to indulge you with such things was but to bring bravery to the Douglas men, or beauty to the women of that noble house. But now I know your taste—would you like another?

EUPHEMIA DOUGLAS.

No, I prythee not.

CAMERON.

Can't we play then at being in love? Imagine

me to be that cousin of yours who comes to court sometimes—the man with the large nose, and round eyes, and fiery valorous hair, that sticks up—so.

EUPHEMIA DOUGLAS.

You in love—an oyster in boots! why, Master Richard, if Love were to come to you, you'd ask him so many questions—"who are you—where do you come from—what are these arrows made of—is there any thing you want with me?"—that the poor little urchin would think he was in a court of justice, and scamper off as fast as his little legs and wings could carry him.

CAMERON.

What should a little minx like you know about Courts of justice?

EUPHEMIA DOUGLAS.

I stood behind the Queen's chair when Duke Murdoch was tried: and they asked the bewildered witnesses so many questions—to and fro—hither and thither—what have you been doing all your life—and when, and how, and with

whom, and where, did you do it?—that I thought, if I were one of those same tormented creatures, I should cry out—" There—condemn me at once with the prisoner, but don't ask me any more questions." And that's the way you'd treat Love. Ah now if you'd love like your friend, there might be some poor foolish woman who'd take pity upon you. You see the true signs of love in him.

CAMERON.

Very clearly—he likes me and his other friends much less than he used. Indeed if a man has been wont to indulge in friendship, or hunting, or warring, or studying, or any other foolish propensity, it all falls, for the time, into this great reservoir of folly, called love. For the time do I say? Alas, there's no knowing, now, that we have a King and Queen who are such a fond couple, how far the fashion of constancy may spread. Love, you know, is a most courtly creature, and very apt to take the ways of the great.

EUPHEMIA DOUGLAS.

See now how many steps higher up the ladder of goodness women are than men, a doctrine I have been preaching to thee, Master Richard, ever since I have had the mischance of so much of thy company. Walter's love for Catharine sucks all other good out of him, as you, showing therein a true masculine friendship, are kind enough to proclaim; but her love for him is like a—

CAMERON.

Bee in a bottle, which makes a great noise.

EUPHEMIA DOUGLAS.

If there is a donation more mischievous than a fairy's gift, it is that officious thrusting of words into people's mouths, Master Richard, when they are looking about for their own. Nobody's words will fit any other person's lips. Don't you know that? Well, as I was about to say, Catharine's love for him is like the unsealing of a fountain. She is only more gentle and loving to all the rest of the world.

CAMERON.

I never said that love might not improve women. Love gives a woman's mind some direction. To men it's a disturbance. But here they come—we must be off. You see how all people shun lovers, and try to leave them to themselves—fear of infection.

LINDSAY.

Yes, 'tis a sadness that I cannot conquer:
To think of Crawar's coming death—the man,
The only man, from whom I ever heard
What I could hold for truth in sacred things:
No talk of beads, and images, and relics,
But something which enjoys full life to-day,
And has eternity before and after;
Whereas what men too oft call venerable,
Shows its antiquity, and claims respect,
From its decay alone.

CATHARINE.

And yet, dear Walter,
If that a woman may on such themes speak,
It seems scarce credible—and sooth to say,

I cannot wish it true, that this one man
Should leave behind the fathers of the Church,
And tell us that our infant prayers were wrong,
And strip days, names, and places, of their
holiness,
And make the way to heaven one steep ascent:
Nothing for us to cling by, Walter dear—
One man against the world.

LINDSAY.

And if 'twere so,
Is it the first time in our history
That one great man has stood against the world,
With truth alone upon his side?

CATHARINE.

But those were ancient times, surely the world
Is wiser now.

[*A laugh from Cameron and Euphemia Douglas.*

He seems a merry man,
Thy friend.

LINDSAY.

Not that—he takes all humours as they come,
But if there's any that possesses him,

'Tis not a mirthful one—but I must go—
Never before have I been first to say
That we must part; but, now I seek the prison,
To hear my master's parting words. Come,
Richard.

[*Exeunt—Lindsay and Cameron going one way, Catharine and Euphemia Douglas, another.*

SCENE V.

Street in Edinburgh.

A crowd of Citizens waiting to see PAUL CRAWAR *led to execution. Enter* WALTER LINDSAY *and* RICHARD CAMERON *disguised as men-at-arms.*

CAMERON [*aside*].

To attempt a rescue would be utter folly.
The mob not with us—here the royal archers—
There the king's guard—I thought you'd see at once—
And don't you know, my friend, a mob's a thing
Having at most the pity of one man,

One ordinary man, amongst them all.
I am not deft, not I, nor ever was,
With those same impish-looking things, called
figures,
But you can tell how much of tenderness
There is in each of these good units round us—
One man's amongst them all—

LINDSAY.

My Nithisdale men, and all of them are here,
Would break the guard, I know, as quick as
thought,
And then we'd fly—The horses are at hand—
Down by the gate.

CAMERON.

When once you've seen the guard you'll find 'tis
hopeless,
Twenty against a thousand are large odds,
That we'd not mind, but, Walter, all the eyes
Of all this crowd, are fatal enemies.
[*Aside to two other men-at-arms.*
Watch what I do: and second me. D'ye hear?
It is the only way to save your master.

Rescue! Rescue the moon! You might as well Try that. [*Shouting heard. The crowd thickens.*

ANDREW SIPPET [*to Cameron*].

Don't knock me about, Sir. Don't tread upon me. I'd have you to know that honest men, lorimers by trade, have feeling in their toes—

LOWRY LUTAR.

As well as men with tin pots on their heads—Give it 'em, Sippy. The best part of their courage is poverty. If they'd got a stiver of their own, they wouldn't be so free with their swords and their lances at other people's bidding.

Gif a man ha got a plack
Deil a bit he'll give a thwack.

Marry, there's a sweet rhyme in that old proverb, with a touch of understanding in it which your rhymes mostly do without.

CAMERON.

Here's a pleasant small hogshead of a man—gibing at us poor men-at-arms because we knock

about us a little sometimes to get our hard living. What do you do? You start with full bellies—are born with them, it's my belief, you citizens,—and there you go on, driving and working and toiling and scraping to make those full bellies fuller and fuller and fuller—Out upon you, your industry is all greediness.

LOWRY LUTAR [*aside*].

A mighty pretty reply as I ever heard from a man with so much tin and brass about him. Its almost as good as myself, a vintner, that sees all manners and dispositions at the best of times. I'll e'en cope with him a little. Here, soldier,

CAMERON.

Yes, old fellow, do you wish to see a little service with us? You'd be a goodly stop-gap in a breach.

LOWRY LUTAR.

No, friend, I've cut all my wise teeth, and done all my fighting. The English know the touch of my hand well. Ask any of 'em, when you go across the border, if they remember

Lowry Lutar. And if you meet with a man who doesn't, you may be sure I knocked all recollection out of his head. But what brings you here? I thought you jolly, reiving, thundering, dogs cared no more about heretics than about priests. It's my belief now you don't know what a heretic is.

CAMERON.

Don't I though, beer-barrel. A heretic insults the rest of the world by believing more or less than they do—he stops too short, or goes too far. And there is a sort of 'em that go sideways—a pestilent, cantankerous, race—the very crabs of heresy.

LINDSAY [*aside to Cameron*].

At such a time how can you jest with this scum?

CAMERON.

Why, for the matter of that, Walter, I am not so happy that I can leave off jesting—and touching scum, I would as soon jest with the scum of a city, as the froth of a court. Indeed

the scum has more substance in it, though dirtier.

Renewed shouting—Enter PAUL CRAWAR *surrounded by guards, and attended by a body of archers. The procession halts.*

PAUL CRAWAR.

Hear my last words, my friends,
And think, that as you hear a dying man,
It is a voice from other worlds you listen to:
There have been times when weariness of flesh,
Or lack of strength from heaven, has made me fear
That I, alone, against the mass of men,
Kings, emperors, prelates, councils, fathers, popes,
Might be in some presumptuous error sunk,
Deeper than those I sought to save—But now,
As lightsome death draws near, I see, my friends,
That all I've said is only less than true—
Less boldly said than what I now would tell you.
I die with joy—but ten such lives as mine
I'd live again with all their ignominy,
Their want of fellowship, their care, their toil,
If that I might convince one other soul—

[*The priests interrupt Paul Crawar, and de-*

sire the procession to move on, and the trumpets to sound.

LINDSAY.

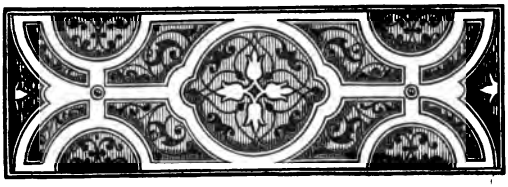
Now then, forward, my friends, dash in amongst them.
What means this treachery? Unhand me, Sir,
Your blood shall answer this to me. What more,
My own men too! This double villany!

RICHARD CAMERON.

A noisy fellow—to the guard room with him.

[*Exit Walter Lindsay borne off by Richard Cameron and the other men-at-arms.*

[*Exeunt omnes.*



ACT II. Scene I.

Audience Chamber in the Palace of Holyrood.

Enter King James, *the* Earl of Athol, Sir Thomas Stewart, *the* Bishop of Glasgow, Sir Walter Ogilvy, Sir John Forester, Alexander Livingston, *and other Privy Counsellors.*

KING JAMES.

HAS Mar returned?

SIR WALTER OGILVY.

Not yet, my Liege.

Enter an Attendant.

ATTENDANT.

An aged woman waits to see your Highness,
And will not be denied—it is a vow,
She says.

KING JAMES.

Admit her.

ALEXANDER LIVINGSTON.

I know her tale, my Liege; a doleful one,
Indeed, it is: a robber, one of those
Protected by the Douglas as they say—

Enter an Old Woman supported by the Attendant.

OLD WOMAN [*to the Attendant*].

Which is the King, good youth?

[*He points out the King to her. She falls on her knees.*

Mercy, my Lord, I'm here a poor old woman,
Was shod with iron shoes—and here I've crawl'd—
I swore I'd see your Grace. 'Twas both my cows
He took—Here are the marks—Their cruel nails
Red-hot upon me.

KING JAMES [*to Livingston*].

What does it mean?

LIVINGSTON.

Her tale is true—a robber, one Macdonald,
Took both her cows: she swore she'd see your
Highness.

And would walk barefoot hither, but she'd do it:
" No, no, not barefoot," said the cruel wretch,
" For I, myself, will have you shod;" and straight
They nailed upon her iron horse-shoes.

[*King James raises the Old Woman up.*

Poor creature—you have nobly done indeed
In coming here. Henceforth you live with me.
Your cattle shall be safe enough.

[*To the Attendant.*

Look to her,
And dress her wounds, and see that she is cared for
In every way as if she were our kith.
The oppressed are kindred to the King.

[*Exit Old Woman and Attendant.*

Protected by the Douglas did you say?
Write, Livingston, and bid the sheriff bring
This wretch to me—in three days from this time,
On peril of his head—Bring him alive—
Protected by the Douglas—what's a king,
Unless he be the living light of law,
Which else might die away in musty parchments?
Protected by the—

Enter an Attendant.

ATTENDANT.

Sir Robert Grahame waits your Highness' pleasure.

KING JAMES.

Let him come in. [*Aside.*

Another of these barons that would awe
The Crown—the forest trees that overhang
Vile robbers' caves.

Enter SIR ROBERT GRAHAME.

GRAHAME.

I come to plead the cause of Earl Stratherne.

KING JAMES.

There's no such Earl.

GRAHAME.

My nephew's then—his cause.

KING JAMES.

It has been settled, Sir; you know it well.
The earldom to heirs male was limited;
And, failing such, reverted to the crown.
My uncle Athol here can vouch for that.

[*The Earl bows.*

That it was e'er bestowed upon your brother
Is only one of many wrongs I suffered
In the long years of my captivity.
I am the injured man.

GRAHAME.

When the same man is judge, and advocate,
And suitor too, the cause, whate'er it be,
Is scarce, perhaps, worth arguing.

KING JAMES.

I can forgive the insolence of one [thoughts.
Who thinks he's wronged, however vain his
And for thy nephew, as he is my kinsman,
I mean the Earldom of Menteith for him.

GRAHAME [*aside*].

A robber's alms. But let it pass.

KING JAMES.

What say you?

GRAHAME.

I will inform my nephew of this grace—
This royal liberality.

KING JAMES.

You may withdraw. [*Exit Sir Robert Grahame.*

Full to the teeth of insolence!
This Council is dissolved. [*Exeunt Councillors.*
Protected by the Douglas—all, throughout,
One gang of thieves—I'd rather be once more
In Windsor's keep caged in with iron bars,
Than thus environ'd by these lawless ruffians—
But I'll spring out upon them yet. I'll have
Their heads, each one of them, their heads, I say,
March, Douglas, Angus—

Enter an Attendant, followed immediately by the EARL OF ANGUS.

Angus, as we were saying.

EARL OF ANGUS.

You said you'd hunt with me to-day, my Liege.

KING JAMES [*singing*].

There is not on earth to my heart such a sound
As the deep bark of Ruach, my staunch old hound;
The syren-voiced maidens may charm for a day,
But Ruach it is that ne'er leads me astray.

[*The King walks up and down, remaining silent.*

EARL OF ANGUS.

The time goes on, my Liege.

KING JAMES.

Ah, so it does,
These stupid state affairs! get thee to horse,
And I'll be there anon. [*Exit Earl of Angus.*
Like the young haggard's flight is that of thought,
Wheeling around in highest air so giddily,
Far out of sight of what 'twas flown at—
How oft to-day I've thought of long past times,
And of the good old King, my peaceful sire;
Wondering if e'er he loved to sit beside me,
And watch his sleeping child, as I do mine.
That picture of delight! The little limbs
All curved as gracefully as flowing water;
The baby face that sleep rests gently on,
As if it feared to hurt those tender features;
The gentle breathing that you bend to hear;
No sorrow to be soothed, no care forgot;
No struggling sleep; no stagnant, drugg'd, repose;
But soft-descending slumbers like the dew.
A sight to make a father's heart o'erflow,
A holy thing—and now so thick in blood
As he must see me—still, everywhere, more, more,

As if from every drop new robbers sprang—
Protected by the Douglas—

Enter the QUEEN.

THE QUEEN.

'Tis seldom that I venture here, my Lord,
But I had hoped when Council time was past,
To have had some minutes' sunshine of thy
presence.
But how is this? Your brow is stern as night,
And there's that tell-tale line of red which shows
How much of wrath you've mastered.

KING JAMES.

I'm sick at heart—
Protected by the Douglas—cursed words
I always hear when some foul deed is done
That would befit the worst of heathen lands.
Some deed! why all their life is wrong and rapine.
We foolish men are like imprisoned reptiles
That fold in angry writhings on each other,
Seeking no respite from the ills around them
But what their mutual hatred brings—and yet
The sympathy of all were not too much

For each of us—to uplift his private burden—
But heed me not: I am, to-day, the woman.

THE QUEEN.

My own sweet love,
You strive too fiercely with these lawless times,
A strife of death—'Twas only yesternight,
I dreamed that crowds were hurrying to the palace,
All seeking you with shouts of wild revenge:
At last from out the wood you ran in haste
Straight to my arms—I woke in agony,
But you were sleeping softly as our child.

KING JAMES.

I love my life as other men—indeed,
I drink a double cup of joy in life,
My own, and thine, dear wife, as all who love;
But life's not all—nor much—
I'm here on high behests that must be heard;
And if they ask my life, rest thee assured
I will not be a niggard of it—
Angus is waiting.

THE QUEEN.

Ah, prithee now, bring from the forest back

A merry heart to grace our feast to-night:
Without it all were naught. [*Exeunt.*

Enter CATHARINE DOUGLAS *and* EUPHEMIA DOUGLAS.

CATHARINE DOUGLAS.

I'm sure the Queen was here—I heard her voice.

EUPHEMIA DOUGLAS.

Nothing so sweet by half.—There's been a Council.
Look, cousin, look. [*She sits on the King's chair.*
My Lords, I speak for justice,
My Lords, for law and justice to the oppressed.
My kingdom groans—

CATHARINE DOUGLAS.

Effie, you mock what's sacred,
Prythee come down, come, Effie.

EUPHEMIA DOUGLAS.

My kingdom groans—the poor
Are stripped—'tis one wide waste—that's just his phrase.
Oh but I see you're really vexed:
[*She comes to Catharine.*
there, there,

You silly thing, I wish I had not said it:
You'll let me laugh at Walter by the day,
But if one jests the least at Majesty,
Why straight you look as grave and sorrowful,
As if one's newest kirtle had been spoiled.
Indeed you do.

CATHARINE DOUGLAS.

You've lived in sunshine always,
You have not seen their sieges, battles, forays;
Or strings of wretched prisoners dragged along:
Or followed in an army's blighting track,
All scarred with fire, or stained with blood—men's limbs
Strewed here and there—the very streams defiled,
And loathsome vultures darkening all the plain—
And this is what he wars against, alone,
Opposed to daily peril, which he sees
And shrinks not from. He is a King to glad
The heart of one who loves her country.

EUPHEMIA DOUGLAS.

Country! leave that to men—'tis what they're made for,

As we to cook, and sew, and dandle brats,
And plague the men sometimes—that's while
we're kittens—
For afterwards we're grave as grown-up-cats,
And keep as close at home; and some would say
We grow as cross—but now 'tis kitten time
With us—So come, let's dress our fur, and show
Our sleekest nature for the ball. You'll see,
The dainty Cameron yet will doat on me.

[*Euphemia Douglas sings.*

The fisherman's daughter sat weaving alone,
But not to the sea
Did she turn her bright ee,
While her voice sounded shrill o'er the waves' wild moan:
" I'll fasten each mesh with might and with main,
" I'll pull it and tug it again and again,
" For the most cunning fish
" That swims in the sea,
" The wariest of fishes
" Is coming to me
" Coming to me
" Coming to me,
" The wariest of fishes
" Is coming to me." [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

A Room in the Palace of Holyrood.

Enter the EARL OF ATHOL, SIR ROBERT STEWART, SIR JOHN STEWART, *and* RICHARD CAMERON.

SIR ROBERT STEWART.

YES, it's quite true. All March's lands are forfeited. A large lump for some longing mouths.

SIR JOHN STEWART.

There are two or three of his dogs I should like to have, myself. I'll go and ask the King.

RICHARD CAMERON.

Well, I shouldn't like to have a disgraced man's dog any more than a dead man's clothes —the hangman's perquisite.

SIR JOHN STEWART.

Somebody must have these dogs, you know.

RICHARD CAMERON.

Yes, but you're not somebody—only Sir

John Stewart: let Somebody do his own dirty work.

SIR JOHN STEWART.

Oh, that's all stuff.

SIR ROBERT STEWART.

Have you seen my suit for to-night, Sir John; it's of a ravishing colour—and so soft, peach-down is jealous of it?

ATHOL.

What nonsense you young men talk about dress: in my day now—

SIR ROBERT STEWART.

In your day, grandfather, there was no such thing as dress—no flow, no design, no idea. Men were bagged, not dressed. For my part, I should have preferred the original skins.

RICHARD CAMERON.

Yes, decorum had its price in that day.

ATHOL.

Pooh, you young dogs! we were such good-looking fellows ourselves: we didn't want all this furbelowing.

SIR ROBERT STEWART [*to Sir John*].

Do come.

SIR JOHN STEWART.

Oh that I will.

RICHARD CAMERON.

Let me come too. [*Aside.*] Two monkeys jabbering over a choice cocoa-nut. Our climate's so cold, we have none of this amusement out-of-doors.

[*Exeunt Sir Robert Stewart, Sir John Stewart, and Richard Cameron.*

ATHOL.

So March is done for—still they bear it tamely,
The beaten hounds! and one by one they'll perish:
It never comes across their cloudy pates
That there's another royal race—the fools—
They never turn to me—
They must be trampled more upon—down—down—
I'll go and see what says the general rumour.

[*Exit the Earl of Athol.*

SCENE III.

Court-yard of Holyrood Palace.

Enter SIR ROBERT GRAHAME *and* WALTER LINDSAY.

GRAHAME.

YES, while he lives, no thought will be endured
That does not square with what the Church decrees:
He signed the warrant for that Crawar's death
Blithely, as if 't had been for some great baron,
Some baron near the crown.

LINDSAY.

We know it well,
And are prepared to suffer.

GRAHAME.

Strike first—strike deep.
Your cause is ours—'tis not his piety
That makes him hunt you down—no priest leads him.

But 'tis a maniàc love of law and order:
These are his specious words, but what they mean
Is but to make the throne the kingdom's heart—
No life, no impulse, but from that.

LINDSAY.

Himself the Church.

GRAHAME.

Church, nobles, parliament, and all—
One more attempt I made to-day for Malise,
My nephew, late you know, Stratherne's young Earl.
But when the judge is judge and suitor too,
Words are but waste; and so I told him.

LINDSAY.

And still you wear your head.

GRAHAME.

He's strong enough
To slight bold words—but, mark, we meet to-morrow:
You stir the youth: I those of riper age.
New men about him—nothing now but priests—
With such an arch dissembler none can tell

Whose turn it may be next—These are the
things
To harp upon: and let them know that March
Is fled, despoiled of all. Now then, farewell.
Bring Cameron, your friend, he's well worth
having.

LINDSAY.

Not for our deeper counsels, Grahame: no.
I will not have him perilled—not for worlds.
To-morrow I will bring him with the rest—
But nothing more.

GRAHAME.

Well, be it so—and, hark,
Do not be absent from the feast to-night:
His eagle eye sees all, and out of anything
Will shape a meaning.

[*Exit Sir Robert Grahame.*

LINDSAY.

There is a loadstone there more potent far
Than all your policy, my friend. [*Exit.*

SCENE IV.

Great Hall in the Palace of Holyrood.

Enter the Lords and Ladies of the Court—amongst them CAMERON, LINDSAY, *and* SIR JOHN STEWART.

[*A flourish of trumpets.*

Enter the KING *and* QUEEN *preceded by the Chamberlain* SIR ROBERT STEWART. *The* QUEEN *attended by her Ladies, and amongst them* CATHARINE *and* EUPHEMIA DOUGLAS. *The* KING *and* QUEEN *take their Chairs of State.*

KING JAMES.

My good Lord Chamberlain,
Bid them commence. There's many a pretty foot,
I see around, that like a prancing steed,
Is all impatience for the start.

[*The dancing begins. In the course of the dance the King and Queen move down from the dais. The dancing ceases.*

KING JAMES [*to the Queen*].

Methinks that I could watch the midnight through
These mazy, joyous, minglings of the dance,
Like those of insects on a summer's eve,
Which fill the air with harmony of movement,
The very type of gladness—As I gaze,
I think of many things, of joy and grief,
Of the sure past, and of the wistful future,
While ever and anon the harp-led dance,
Fulfils the part of chorus to my thoughts,
And weaves a mystic broidery round them all.
So that they seem one piece, albeit wrought
Of diverse thoughts—
'Tis something too to see a numerous band
Moving in sweet accord and settled purpose,
Presenting thus the image of a state
Swayed by the harmony of law.

THE QUEEN.

I will not have you think
Of aught like kingcraft now: for these are my hours.
How gay the Chamberlain is decked to-night!
That velvet's choice.

KING JAMES.

The general throng looks bravely:
I think, my love, that e'en proud Windsor's halls
Would not feel shamed at such a company.

THE QUEEN.

There's one at least who looks a king.

KING JAMES.

You little flattering thing, I've naught to give
Thee more: and where there's nothing to be gained,
Fine speeches are but spendthrift things.

THE QUEEN.

But mine are no fine speeches.

KING JAMES.

The mirth grows slack,
We must arouse ourselves and play the host.
[*He beckons to the Chamberlain.*
Is Alan here, Alan à Perth?

SIR ROBERT STEWART.

He is,
My Liege.

KING JAMES.

Greet him from us; and beg his newest roundelay.

[*Alan à Perth sings.*]

A belted Earl wooed Katie Vane,
And wooed her fair and long,
He told her of his wide domain,
His parks and castles strong.
But her heart said "I canna'"
And her eyes said "I winna'"
And her tongue said "no"
No no no no no no
No no no no no.

The next a gallant Knight was he
That wooed this maiden prim;
He spoke of deeds of chivalry,
All to be done by him.
But her heart said "I canna'"
And her eyes said "I winna'"
And her tongue said "no"
No no no no no no
No no no no no.

A minstrel then wooed Katie Vane,
A youth of gentle mien;
Who told, in many a witching strain,
The beauty of her een.

And her heart said "I'm thine, love"
And her eyes said "you're mine, love."
But her tongue said "no"
No no no no no no
For a maiden's yes is no.

KING JAMES.

A pretty tuneful thing—but not like Alan.
He's mostly of the saddest.

[*To the Chamberlain.*

Bid him sing more.

[*Alan à Perth sings.*]

The tall church towers sent forth their merriest sound,
And gayest sunbeams gladdened all around;
The bridegroom looked so cheerily,
The bride she blushed so winsomely,
The crowd they laughed so merrily,
Oh 'twas a sight to see!

Beneath the dark archway, aloof from the rest,
There stood a pale girl, with her hands on her breast;
Her kirtle carelessly was tied,
Her unkempt tresses floated wide,
Her snood, a maiden's choicest pride,
Had long been laid aside.

She sighed, and she wept, and she hung down her head,
And mournfully thus to the cold stones she said;
"It grieves my very soul to see
"A merry marriage company,
"And think that all is lost to me,
"Love, and hope, and purity."

KING JAMES.

I like that well, 'tis one we've heard before,
At the Dominicans I think? You like it?

THE QUEEN.

Yes, but they all seem poor to thine.

KING JAMES.

Aye, fair one,
For mine oft sing of thee.

THE QUEEN.

Now you would mock me, James.
You know I like them best, and not for that.

EUPHEMIA DOUGLAS [*to Cameron*].

Don't you pity poor Catharine and Walter—no dancing together to-night. They would have been so happy.

CAMERON.

I don't pity them at all. I dare say they'd

quarrel if they were together. Your would-have-been happiness is greater than all. Besides, how inordinate to look for pleasure at a festival. Look for falsehood, grimace, weariness, if you like; and you'll find them in every corner of the hall.

EUPHEMIA DOUGLAS.

Yes, the men are so stupid.

CAMERON.

You'll hear a man whistle at his work cheerily enough; but his pleasure is too serious a thing to be whistled over. How the fairies must shake their little sides, when they peer in at an assemblage of gross human beings trying to amuse themselves. Fancy an ogre ogling you, until you were ready to drop with terror, squeezing that delicate hand until the fingers were all one lump, and never would be fingers again: the poor, lovesick, monster thinking all the time that he was making himself so agreeable. That's the human creature courting that delicate maiden, Pleasure. His very look at her rubs the down off her wings. And so the tender Walter and

the gentle Catharine are not dancing together. It's very sad.

EUPHEMIA DOUGLAS.

Oh you philosopher!—you are one of those who are so calm at other people's misfortunes—who think the rest of the world was made for their wisdoms to pronounce upon—who always say, "There are two sides to a question."

CAMERON.

Not two sides—two handles. But it's cold work, as you would say, looking on at other people's follies—shall we dance?

EUPHEMIA DOUGLAS.

No, we shall not. Philosophers never dance in time. They're for ever treading on one's toes; or, indeed, upon their own, for they are the clumsiest animals in creation.

[*She moves away.*

CAMERON [*aside.*]

Ugh—There they are, always together—giving the worst of examples—trying to impose upon the world. It's my belief he means to

delude all the young nobles into marriage as the surest mode of taming them. One never gets any talk with the Queen; and I do like to hear her clip her little English words, and say her wise sayings, all learnt from dear James; but there's no speaking to her while the tiger's by.

SIR JOHN STEWART—[*talking to a knot of young nobles which Cameron joins*].

The song's a good song. Talk of snoods. Why there's Katie Douglas: she wears a snood; and if she isn't too fond of somebody that's sitting in the big chair, somebody of my name, though he is a king, I'm not John Stewart. Oh yes, I'll wear a snood myself.

CAMERON [*aside*].

Gross animal! [*aloud*] Think you, Sir John, there is but one kind of love?

SIR JOHN STEWART.

No, no, love is like a zebra—many stripes. But as for Katie Douglas—

CAMERON [*turning to the other Lords*].

Well, I'm a charitable man; I've always

thought that your suspicious people might have left off being wicked themselves: of course they couldn't have begun by being honest-hearted fellows.

SIR JOHN STEWART.

Do you mean me, Sir? You're a wit; and wits want drubbing sometimes, Sir.

[*He strikes Cameron in the face.*

[*The King comes down and seizes Stewart by the arm, leads him to a table, places his hand upon it, draws his own hunting knife, and gives it to Cameron.*

KING JAMES.

Stir not—Strike, Sir—strike to the bone—That hand
Shall never leave the palace it disgraced.
What then, are there not fields enough to shed
Your foolish blood upon, but in my presence,
Here, as my guests, you bandy blows?

[*Cameron lays down the knife.*

KING JAMES.

Take it again. I do not doubt the fault
Was yours as much as his.

THE QUEEN.

Oh James, for my sake spare the youth. Your
cousin! [*The ladies kneel to the King.*

KING JAMES.

Cousin indeed! A woman's precious reason,
As if the course of law could recognize
Relationship. To him the shame is greater.
Strike, Sir. Delay is traitorous.

Enter the BISHOP OF GLASGOW *and other Ecclesiastics.*

BISHOP OF GLASGOW.

Forbear, my gracious Liege, for this one time.
I do not think to palliate his crime,
But we are new to aught like law and order—
New, till the coming of your happy reign.
Let this be held a warning: if, again,
Such rudeness dare this presence, mine is not
The voice to stay your wrath. But spare him now:
See too his blind, bewildered, state.

THE QUEEN.

I hardly dare to speak: for mine, my Lord,
Will be but woman's reasons.

KING JAMES.

Nay, Jane, nay.

THE QUEEN.

But henceforth festivals will be no joy
To me, but always blood upon the floors.
Spare him this once.

KING JAMES [*to Sir John Stewart.*]

Take up thy hand: and from my presence, Sir,
I prythee take thyself, and come no more
Within these precincts. [*Exit Sir John Stewart.*
To enforce the penalty
Might not be wise when all are set against me;
For there is none of you that feels with me,
And sees our country shamed by these excesses.
Not e'en the palace free from grossest outrage—
A savage horde of men, and not a nation.
[*Aside.*
Alone, alone, and thus it always will be.
[*The King walks away—Exeunt omnes.*

ACT III. Scene I.

An Archery-ground near Edinburgh.

Enter Andrew Sippet, Lowry Lutar, Cuthbert Makcay, Adam Cummin, *and other Citizens—afterwards* Walter Lindsay, Richard Cameron, *and other young Nobles.*

ANDREW SIPPET.

THE first never has so good a chance as the rest, but I'll show you a bit of the way, I think. [*His arrow goes wide of the mark, the others laugh*]. If I had drawn it higher, it wouldn't have made such a round, you know. But I've no luck. When I go a fishing, the fish are always popping up the other side of the river; but on mine it's as still as a bowl of firmity. I never won at pitch and toss, or archery, or any of

these chance things. Maybe, after all, luck's not canny. There was Tam Spurl; a clever, lucky chiel now he was; he found a purse on the highway one day, and was hanged for't. It doesn't always do to be so very lucky.

LOWRY LUTAR.

How is it, friend Sippy, that the English pull a bow so crack and deft: tell me that. They're not a lucky people. We're too near 'em for that.

ANDREW SIPPET.

The English you see are a people there's no accounting for. Now, Adam, show 'em that we can do something in our street.

[*Adam Cummin shoots at the butt, but his arrow falls far short of it.*

ADAM CUMMIN.

It's not my own bow—mine's at home—Oh, I warrant you, I pull my own bow. You see how straight it went.

LOWRY LUTAR.

Like a niggard's generosity, which ends in blessing the poor and bidding them go their way.

Oh yes it went very straight as far as it did go. [*Cuthbert Mackay shoots and hits the butt*]. That's Cutty's English blood. All his grandmother's doing. I warrant you he has the exact twist of his great grandfather's nose. He hits the butt—gobbles away at each meal, as if it were for a three days march—and has his great grandfather's nose—at least it is not a Mackay nose, which shows, neighbours, how much there is in faces, as I've always told you.

ADAM CUMMIN.

I think I'll try again, but I can't do much with such a bow as this. [*The arrow is twisted in the string, and flies off a few paces from him. A general shout of laughter*]. Never knew such a thing before: but this arrow hasn't the right goose feather. A Muscovy duck, and nothing better, as I'm a true christian man.

LOWRY LUTAR.

Adam's right. The goose is not in the arrow.

ADAM CUMMIN.

Ah, I like a good game at football, where one

is sure to kick something, or somebody, every time. I think I used to play too.

LOWRY LUTAR.

Ever since playing at football has been forbidden by Act of Parliament there isn't a man I know who hasn't told me what a good player he used to be before the king's time. [*Lowry turns to Cameron.*] It's a silly thing to my mind, Sir, that the king can't let people kick each other about, and call it football; and that he will have us play with these bows—to make archers of us all. But you see even a king can't get ripe apples to grow upon green gooseberry bushes.

CAMERON.

Human nature's such an obstinate pig, friend Lowry, that if you show you want it to go one way, it's sure to take another. Put a loaf before a half-starved beggar, and order him to eat: ten to one he'll get up and say, "Thank you, Sir, I've had enough."

[*The Citizens shoot a few more times at the butt, and then move off.*

The king keeps football for his private use,
And we're the ball, my friends—now March is gone,
King James will kick the rest of us to England.
But all by law. Parchment's the thing. Words, words—
More death by words than swords.

FIRST NOBLE.

By knives sometimes, friend Cameron, eh? Methought
Last night you'd scarce escape the hangman's office.

CAMERON.

By heaven, I'd not have done it. That knife—it should—
But it's no matter.

SECOND NOBLE.

Why Cameron in high wrath, I vow. Look all.
King James has done his greatest work.

LINDSAY.

The man whose blood's not stirred, his blood is puddle.
What we, whose ancestors walked hand-in-hand

With this man's forefathers and knew them not
Their betters—no—shall we go grovelling on—
Licking the dust before him and those priests
Who bend their craft, my friends, to one result,
To make a level plain like this before us,
And one majestic oak alone upon it.
The rest all stripped, or dwarfed, or rooted up—
In your indignant looks I read your minds.
And now I say to all, what yester-eve
I said to each, and found no halting heart.
The time is come to make our stand, while yet
We have some liberty of speech, are still
At large, permitted still to draw our breath.
For if we yield another step, my friends,
The prison gates will close on us for aye.
Now then to Grahame's: there we meet a man
Who's fit to cope with any king.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

SCENE II.

A room in Sir Robert Grahame's house at Edinburgh.

Enter several Nobles, amongst them WILLIAM HAY OF ERROL, *the* EARL OF DOUGLAS, *the* EARL OF ANGUS, SCRIMGEOUR *constable of Dundee,* SIR ROBERT GRAHAME, WALTER LINDSAY, ADAM HEPBURN, SIR JOHN MONTGOMERY, RICHARD CAMERON, SIR JOHN HALL, THOMAS CHAMBERS, *and* CHRISTOPHER CHAMBERS.

CHRISTOPHER CHAMBERS [*to Lindsay*].

'Tis an heroic purpose that we meet for.

LINDSAY.

Indeed it is.

CAMERON [*aside to Lindsay*].

I do not like that man—'Tis vanity,
A selfish vanity that brings him here.
He served the duke; so now is in the shade,
And comes to us. He has still some place at court,

And let the king just pat him on the back
He'd sell us all.
Your other vices have some stuff, some earth,
To hold to; but this vanity's all water,
And yields at every touch.

SIR ROBERT GRAHAME.

My Lords, you know full well what 'tis we're met for:
And need no tedious prelude to my tale.
But where is Albany, and where is Lennox,
Where Alexander Stewart?—if alive,
They would full sure have been this day amongst us.
The headsman has them all—and where is March?
Why March has fled to England, scorning utterly,
As well he may, the new invented earldom,
Our gracious king awards him in exchange
For his broad lands of March, and for a name
That almost ranks with kings. You see, my Lords,
The tallest poppies first—that Roman story.
But some may say, the king quiet now—

Have you not seen the gurgling wave withdraw,
Draining the pebbly beach from every rill,
And rolling on and on, as if it meant
To leave the shore for aye—one moment's pause,
And, look, it thunders up the bank again,
Sweeping away the fools who thought, forsooth,
That it had fled, poor innocent, to rest
Upon the bosom of its parent deeps?
And who amongst you but may hear to-day,
The king has found some claim on his estate.
Some buried claim, and then with priests for judges
The poor man wanders forth in beggary
To other lands. And yet he wore a sword
Upon his side. Stand man to man, and show
Some front. Wait not by ones or twos to perish.
Tell him your wrongs, and teach this ballad-monger
There's something more than words to back your rights.
Strike now.

EARL OF DOUGLAS.

Grahame says well, we must speak out.

If there has been a lull in James's fury,
This suit with March proclaims a coming tempest:
When March has fallen, who, I ask, is safe?
And then these creatures ever near the king,
Who poison all the atmosphere at court,
This new-bred slime—these Livingstons, these Crichtons—
'Tis not a week ago I sought the king—
The usher bade me wait—I loitered there—
Crichton came sweeping through the presence-chamber,
And entered instantly—no bar for him.
I turned away: and did not fell the slave
Who let a Crichton in, and stopt a Douglas.

GRAHAME.

King James is right: for such designs as his
He wisely chooses low-born ministers.
When you pursue the noble stag, my Lords,
'Tis not with creatures like himself you hunt
Him down, but with a base-bred, yelping, pack,
That crouch, and fawn, and watch their master's eye,
Envious, vile curs, of all nobility,

But knowing well the hand that beats and feeds
them.
I'd tell him that these men must quit the court.
Back with them to the mushroom soil from whence
They sprung. They are not peers for us.

EARL OF ANGUS.

Be you our spokesman, Grahame.

SIR ROBERT GRAHAME.

You'll back me stoutly—all of you?

[*The Nobles shout "We will, we will."*

I'll do it then, I'll beard this man, myself,
And tell him truths he never heard, perchance:
No, not in his captivity—Before
You all, and in the assembled Parliament,
I'll do't.

[*The Nobles cry out "A Grahame, a Grahame."*

Exeunt omnes.

SCENE III.

Court-yard in the Palace of Holyrood.

Enter WALTER LINDSAY *and* CATHARINE DOUGLAS.

CATHARINE.

INDEED, indeed, but I saw nothing of thee;
It might almost have been a court procession,
For aught of gladness in't.
Oh 'twas all wrong last night, no taste of pleasure:
So much as we had thought of it! Mayhap,
This looking forward with a sunny hope,
Oft fades joy's dainty-coloured tapestry,
Before 'tis touched.

LINDSAY.

Not nature's colours, dearest.
They are the children of the sun—
But 'twas a dismal feast, and such an end to't,
What wild barbarity!

CATHARINE.

That foolish Stewart!

LINDSAY.

That tyrant James!

CATHARINE.

Oh Walter, what a word!
The King was stern and fierce last night—more moved
Than e'er I've seen, at least before his court:
But think what cares, what toils, what harassments,
By night and day, beset him—lawlessness,
His mortal foe, pervading everywhere.
He is the man who'll give his time, his thought,
His life, and what is more, all joy in life,
And ask from heaven no other recompense
But that the humblest subject may have justice,
And that e'en womanhood may walk the land
Unscared by violence. This is no tyrant.

LINDSAY.

Ambition, Proteus-like, will take all forms.
But, maiden, this same man who cares so much

For what is just, forbids th' immortal mind
One different thought from what his code enjoins.
That too in themes where man's intelligence
Is but at best a torch, in daylight needless,
At night, and in the vast extent of space,
A little better than the glow-worm's twinkle.
But men, vain men, clipping infinity
Within their poor and meagre forms, exclaim
"This then is truth. Die or believe it all."
I loathe the bigot James's rule.

CATHARINE.

'Tis not for kindness to my orphan state,
'Tis not for that alone I love the King:
Did you but know the grandeur of his soul,
You'd feel with me. How oft I've thought you like him.
Like him in truth, in constancy, in daring,
Save that what's cut with sternest character
In him—the fruit of long captivity—
My Walter shows with softer, happier, outline.
Now do not wrong him, dearest.

LINDSAY.

I loathe his rule
And him.

CATHARINE.

Nay, Sir, but this is most unkind.
Did you but say that my worst enemy
Was loved by you; trust me, I'd wring my heart
But he should be my friend—I do not mind
Your scorn—Of late the King has shared such scorn
With holiest men—the very arrogance
You blame so much in them, the assembled church,
Is it extinct in you? To stand alone—
And say all bygone thought has been a waste—
And rest upon your own authority—
And spurn whatever does not find a place
At once in your mind—
Nay, Walter dear, forgive these words, but—

[*Sir Robert Grahame crosses the stage—Lindsay bows to Catharine and joins Sir Robert.*

And he is gone—for two long, dreary, days
I shall not see him more—in anger gone.

And who was I to rate and scorn him thus,
As if he knew the King, as if, whate'er
He said, it were not full of nobleness.
Oh, I am mad—quite mad—the first unkindness—
[*She looks after him.*
No—he is not—he will not turn. [*Exit.*

SCENE IV.

Street in Edinburgh.

Procession of the Estates to Parliament—Enter LOWRY LUTAR, ADAM CUMMIN, CUTHBERT MACKAY, ANDREW SIPPET, *and other Citizens.*

ANDREW SIPPET.

How puffy the Grahame looks to-day: they're all chirrupping about him like young chickens.

ADAM CUMMIN.

He's the best speaker of the lot. They say it's for all the world like a trumpet. When you hear him you long to hit somebody. Oh I know the feeling.

LOWRY LUTAR.

To my thinking now, that young Cameron, though he's hardly fledged yet, has mair in him here, [*touching his head*] but he'll never be an orator.

ADAM CUMMIN.

Eh, why not, neighbour?

LOWRY LUTAR.

He can't make a thing look bigger than it is. His learning was much neglected; he was never taught to blow soap-bubbles, which is the only practice for after-life. Oh, I warrant you, I think well of a boy that you see on the top of a wall blowing bubbles of a summer's day. Pat him on the head, and most like you'll have touched a great man. Besides, as to this young Cameron, you could answer him any day.

ADAM CUMMIN.

And you couldn't answer an orator?

LOWRY LUTAR.

Oh no. Strike at him here, he's got his guard up. Poke at him there, there's his guard again. Come down on his head—hang him, there he's

up with you. Bless you there's no tit for which he hasn't got a tat. Quick eye, lithe leg, ready hand, but mind—I don't go to say that you'd always find so much in the head, if you could get a knock at it.

ADAM CUMMIN.

Not more than the like of me who haven't got the words?

LOWRY LUTAR.

No. There was Tam Jinks, he could have banged any three English in the fencing way: but he was a poor fish of a creature after all. He wouldn't have got ten men to follow him, in the whole army: and if he had, he'd a led them into the biggest ditch in the country. And so with your words—bonny fence with them is not always braw sense: though, Adam, as long as you and I live, and maybe for some years afterwards, they'll be changed for the same money.

ADAM CUMMIN.

Well, Lowry, everybody says you're a wise man—so wise that some think you ought to be burnt.

LOWRY LUTAR.

Thank 'em kindly.

ADAM CUMMIN.

Well—that you're a wise man: and your words now come out like soldiers on drill—right—left—right—left. No stumbling on each other's heels.

LOWRY LUTAR.

I don't mean to say that the two things don't often come together. I see, Adam, you're not without glimmerings. You shoot a good shot, when you've got your own bow, you know. I'll tell you a little fable now that just came into my head while these silks and furs were streaming by.

ADAM CUMMIN.

Oh do.

LOWRY LUTAR.

There was once a young fox. Foxes were made to be in fables, you know. Well, there was once a young fox, that didn't so much as know the taste of goose-flesh. And he used every year to call the neighbouring geese to

council, to talk, or rather to hiss, over the affairs of the neighbourhood. Now your goose is a very consulting bird, and there they might be seen, stretching their long necks, and cackle, cackle, cackle, coming over many a hill and moorland to the Fox's council. And when they'd laid their bills together, and the Fox had told them to take good care of the commons, which you'd ha thought they'd ha done for their own sake, he used to put two or three of these geese together, calling 'em a committee, and setting 'em to inquire into the life and character of some one unfortunate goose, and most of all, to ask how that goose came by so many feathers. The end was, that sometimes they condemned him to lose a bit of his long neck, and sometimes a good handful of his feathers. And how it happened nobody knows, but somehow or other, every year the young Fox grew fatter and fatter, and every year the geese grew thinner and thinner, and cackled up to the council with fewer feathers about 'em. And there's the end of my story. [*Exit Lowry Lutar.*

ADAM CUMMIN.

I don't make it out: there are so many foxes, and so many geese too, in the world; but I'm sure that there's a meaning in it as long as my arm, if one could but dig it up. Lowry's the fox himself. Eh, neighbours?

[*The others say "Yes—that's it."*

Exeunt omnes.

SCENE V.

Parliament House in Edinburgh.

Enter the Nobles and others composing the assembled Estates; and then the KING, *who takes his seat on the throne.*

KING JAMES.

To all here met we give our hearty greeting:
Our faithful peers and trusty councillors,
It glads our soul once more to see you round us.
But ere, my Lords, you occupy yourselves
With your high trusts, permit your King to ask

One cherished boon from all assembled here.
Throughout the groaning land, from east to west,
There wander forth large troops of wretched men,
No robbers they—no mercenary bands—
But homeless outcasts all—my Lords, your tenants,
Your tenants dispossessed, I do not say
By any breach of earthly laws; but there
They go, the shame and pity of the land.
From town to town with joyous pomp you move,
From tournament to tournament, my Lords;
And many lands have smiled upon your feats,
In many lands you've garnered joy and sorrow.
And if you have not wanderers been—why art,
And song, and science, make a man possess
All time, all space. The world is yours—
But those poor men, the poetry of life
For them is centred in a few bleak fields.
The ridge o'er which from earliest youth they've seen
The Sun go down—the village trysting place—
Their field for sports—the little nest of graves,
Where each dumb mound records so much for them—

Such are the landmarks of their cares and joys.
Remove them thence, you leave their age a blank.
But these are sorrows which they feel not now,
For Want, which like Ambition's direful self,
Knows no companion in the human soul,
Now holds them utterly. My Lords, I crave
Your promise to abridge these practices:
Be slow to turn your wretched serfs adrift.
Making them face the hungry winter's blast
You would not let your beasts of burden feel.
Be slow, I say, to turn these men adrift.
The general weal, aye and your welfare too,
Demand from you this care. I humbly ask it,
Your King.

SIR ROBERT GRAHAME.

Another class of wandering men, my Liege,
Demands our foremost care: your nobles they.
We are not poets here, or we might tell
What that man feels who takes a long last look
At those broad lands and pine-clad distances,
Where he and his great ancestry have ruled
For ages past, with almost regal sway.
The Earl of March could tell us of these feelings—

The Earl of Buchan now—Those same poor men
Whose wrongs you told—at least they were not forced
To change their very names. And well for them
They're not of royal blood, for 'tis not exile
To any land on earth they then would suffer:
But they would follow Albany and Lennox,
Down the dark way of death—
For such great wrongs, the wrongs of Scotland's nobles,
'Tis that we're met to-day to seek redress!
Restore the banished lords, disgorge thy plunder,
Dismiss these priests who counsel crooked ways,
Spurn from your court the low-born race that crowd it,
Rule if you please by law, but not a law
Framed for yourself alone, a bird of prey
Let slip on whom you please. Rule thus, or else—

KING JAMES [*springing from the throne*].

Arrest this traitorous fool. [*The nobles hesitate.*
You, Douglas; Angus, you:
Arrest him instantly, I say.

[*The Earls of Douglas and Angus go slowly*

towards Sir Robert Grahame; some other Lords follow them.

SIR ROBERT GRAHAME.

You're not so base—what seize on me, your spokesman,
The man, who at the peril of his life,
Spoke out for you—perish you may, perish
You must; for naught can save a race of cowards.
I'll not say more, but think, my Lords, on me,
Whene'er you feel that tiger's teeth in you.

[*Lindsay from the bottom of the hall shouts out "One blow for Grahame."*

CAMERON [*dragging Lindsay down amongst the crowd.*]

What, when these Earls themselves give way, you're mad,
As mad as Grahame.

KING JAMES.

As for this foolish, braggart, man, his doom
Is short. I will not take his life, though forfeited
By treason manifest. Let him not dare
To approach the Court again: and be it known
His lands are forfeit to the Crown. Remove him.

[*Grahame is led out.*

And you, my Lords, let not presumptuous tongues
Your choice obtain, and say they speak your words,
But come to us, and we will be your spokesman—
In aught that's just. To-morrow we'll say more
Touching the cause in which we sought to move you.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

ACT IV. Scene I.

A Hut on a Plain near Perth.

Enter Mauld.

[*She sings.*]

The King he lives in Stirling toun,
The Laird in his castle ha',
Wi' big stone walls they're girt aroun'
To keep their foes awa'.
But give me my Donald, a cuishla ma chree,
The lad of the heather's the lad for me.
Dirdum dardum dudaree
Dirdum dardum dudaree.

Oh dear, dear, how singing do put one in mind of bygones! I mind singing that song on Downy Grahame's wedding-day: and now there's his

son Shamus a long-legged, bold, varlet as there is in the haill country—makes his foster-mother's heart proud, he does. What can his master and he be coming here for to-day? Some mischief to somebody or other—some lowland body, and then it's no great matter.

Enter SIR ROBERT GRAHAME *in disguise, and* SHAMUS.

Now, Shamus dear, you'll have some bannocks: you used to say that nobody made them as good for you as your old foster-mother.

SHAMUS.

This eating and drinking is rather a lowland trick; but it helps to pass time away, mother; so bring the bannocks; hot, hot, hot, mother.

GRAHAME.

I think the old man's sure. Within his heart
Ambition's not as yet dethroned by avarice.
Walter the First! I almost smiled to see
His glistening eyes when first I hailed him King.
His grandson's weaker stuff. But we must have
him.

Enter the EARL OF ATHOL.

Good-morrow to my Liege.

ATHOL.

Folly, Sir Robert,
Folly. I listen to your wrongs, and wish
That I could cancel them; but I'm no King,
Nor shall be; though, mayhap, my claim to kingship
Is better far than some who bear the title.

GRAHAME.

I but anticipate the stroke of time:
Within this year 'tis said you will be crowned.
In every Highland hut there's some such saying,
Some mystic writing on the hearts of men
By fate's unerring finger.

ATHOL.

Then let it come,
But I'll not beckon it.

GRAHAME.

Think you, my Lord,
That crowns descend on men, like gentle rain

Upon th' unconscious earth—no, they are torn down,
Prizes of noblest strife and utmost daring.

ATHOL.

Look to mine age.

GRAHAME.

I do, and naught I see
That might not sway the greatest realm. Besides,
My gracious Liege, you're rich in children's children,
A line of Kings that in the great hereafter,
Will ever bless you for this day's resolve,
You, their great ancestor, whose stalwart might
Expelled the intruding, cuckoo, bastard, race,
Whose only title was your father's fondness,
His doting, misplaced, love—forgive, my Liege,
My boldness: thus it was. On Scotland's throne
How came the children of Elizabeth More,
If 'twas not so?

ATHOL.

I'll not gainsay it, Grahame;
But say a bastard race now holds the throne.

What then: the wisdom of th' assembled states
Confirmed this choice.

GRAHAME.

That which was done through fear,
Force may undo—No Parliament, no Pope
Can legalize a wrong. Once claim your own
You'll soon find men enough to back you.

ATHOL.

What men?

GRAHAME.

The wrongs the King has done to us his nobles:
These are a force paid, clothed, and armed, on your side.
I seek your grandson now, the Chamberlain,
The rightful heir, but abject as a serf,
Sweeping the ground before the usurper's feet,
His Chamberlain forsooth!

ATHOL.

Your words do quicken much my thoughts, but still—

GRAHAME.

You see that far-off tower—think you its bells

Will e'er proclaim as King "Walter the First,"
If thus Lord Athol plays with destiny.
'Tis like the caitiff swerving of a horse,
That starts at every shadow in the way,
And, foolish thing, returning starts again.
Let me but tell your grandson, you'll be king,
And leave the rest to us.

ATHOL.

Go not so far,
But sound your way—his life must not be touched.

GRAHAME.

Oh yes, indeed: dethroned kings live so long,
That it were worth one's while to save his life.
Besides, he's of a brood that might be killed,
But will not see themselves despoiled.

ATHOL.

Then let it be
As you have planned; only, with nicest caution.
We're on a pathway now that will not bear
One erring step.

GRAHAME.

There is no erring step

Where mindful valour walks. Farewell, my
Liege.
But I must have some token.

ATHOL.

My signet ring.

[*He takes it off and gives it to Sir Robert Grahame.*

Hark! what was that: some noise—

GRAHAME.

Nothing, indeed.
Farewell, again. All time seems lost to me
That's not devoted to this end.

[*Exeunt the Earl of Athol, Sir Robert Grahame, and Shamus.*

MAULD.

They thought I didn't know their English jargon. The poor dear young King, so good as he is to any old body. But I'll set him on the scent. I'll ferret out their wicked ways from Shamus. Shamus, though, mustn't be hurt. Oh dear, dear, there's no doing any good without some harm to the back of it. One can't knock a bit of a lowland body on the head; but the creature

has got a wife and weans at hame that 'll no be the better for't. Oh Shamus, Shamus, if you wern't in the way, they might all be hanged for me. But I'll e'en manage it some gate or other.

[*She goes into the hut.*

SCENE II.

A Heath near Edinburgh.

Enter SIR ROBERT GRAHAME.

GRAHAME.

I'm always first. Methinks this coxcomb thing,
I'm waiting for, might care to win a crown;
At least as much as royal robes exceed
In show a chamberlain's.

Enter SIR ROBERT STEWART.

You got the signet?

STEWART.

I did.

GRAHAME.

And read the scroll?

STEWART.

In sooth I did;
And here I've come to meet you, though you know
It's somewhat perilous to meet an outlaw.

GRAHAME.

To hazard meeting him, although an outlaw,
Who seeks to make you Scotland's King, Sir Robert,
Is no large sacrifice—but let it pass.
Athol consents—a band of trusty friends
Are at my beck—each day by some new tyranny
The King becomes more feared, and loathed, by all.
Our enterprise is sure, if you but say
You'll be its keystone.

STEWART.

But what ingratitude!
Since his return I've known no lack of favour.
See how he trusts in me as Chamberlain!

GRAHAME.

His bounty's great indeed. He takes your all,
And doles you out some handfuls now and then.

He seized upon Stratherne's wide territory,
And gave my nephew in its stead some earth
That might suffice to keep the youth from want,
From open want, which would have shamed the robber.
He takes the vast inheritance of March,
And, bounteous man, he offers to the Earl
Some yearly pittance: then, again, he's king,
To your dishonour, king. He makes you chamberlain.
Oh yes his generosity!

STEWART.

But what
Will all men say!

GRAHAME.

Succeed, and men shall say
Whate'er you please. But if you care for saying,
You're more a slave than any of your vassals:
They follow you in herds, and are for peace,
Or war, as your intelligence directs;
But then they come obedient to your power,
And may be free in mind; while you, you think
What others think, or what you think they'll say,

Shaping your course by something scarce more tangible
Than dreams, at best the shadows on the stream
Of aspen trees by flickering breezes swayed—
Load me with irons, drive me from morn 'till night,
I'm not the utter slave which that man is,
Whose sole word, thought, and deed, are built on what
The world may say of him.

STEWART.

Oh, very true:
And if the King proceeds against the nobles
As late he has done, why—

GRAHAME.

You cannot dabble
In what, if we should fail, most men would call
By the ugly name of treason; no, you cannot,
Like little, shivering, boys, just dip a foot,
And then run backwards from the stream, Sir Robert.
But plunge you must at once. I 'gin to see

There may be truth in what the King said
jeeringly,
One day when you were hurling at the bar,
And hurled but gingerly, " Our Chamberlain"
Quoth he, " is stouter as a carpet knight
Than on the good green sward." You know the
soft,
But meaning, way in which he drops those things.

STEWART.

An idle jest—
I do not say your nephew is not wronged,
Nor that yourself—

GRAHAME.

How bright will be that day
When we receive our lands and dignities
Again from you; for e'en in Athol's time,
Your hand will be the guiding one.

STEWART.

A host of friends you say?

GRAHAME.

Not many yet,

To whom 'tis known, but all men's hearts are
with us:
Chambers, and Hall, and Thomas Chambers too,
All friends of Albany's, and injured men,
They know the plot: and then we've Walter
Lindsay.

STEWART.

Well, he's a gallant fellow at a feast,
And stout upon the green sward too;

GRAHAME.

To-morrow 'tis
We meet, and you'll be there. The place and time
I'll let you know.

STEWART.

I'll think of it. Adieu.
There's some one yonder looking.

[*Exit Sir Robert Stewart.*

GRAHAME.

You'll think of it, indeed!
No, that you will not do, but it will all
Be thought of for you. It stung him to the quick.
That happy thought about the hurling match.
Oh, vanity, all other goads compared
To thee are poor devices! [*Exit.*

SCENE III.

Room in Holyrood Palace.

KING JAMES [*alone, reading a letter*].

"ROBERT GRAHAME hereby declares that he is no more liege-man to James Stewart, (that means me, I suppose) and hopes yet to see the day when he shall hew down the tyrant whose many murders have desolated even his own house." Not very perspicuous, as the grammarians would say, but this grand writing with hes and hims and hises seldom is: however, it's clear enough. There's something droll about this fellow's insolence—a formal and exact assassin—no step without due notice—in all things the lawyer, for that was his breeding. But there's danger in't. I will return the courtesy, and set a value on his head which no one else would give for it.

[*The King walks up and down.*

Had I been apt to tax my poorer subjects,
To rob the Church, to drain the State's revenue
By lavish grants on flattering followers poured,
James the Munificent they would have hailed me.
But as I seek to reinstate the Crown
In what th' usurping Albany deprived it of,
Robber's my name; but that's the smallest part;
'Tis that I guard the poor's inheritance
Just as my own—'tis that the cottage latch
Is now of more avail than banded followers,
And that the man, who dares to force it, feels,
Already feels, my clutch upon his throat,
And looks behind, and shrinks at every breeze:
That's why these Barons chafe—and much I might
Bemoan my fate at all their calumny,
But that I do not care enough to talk of it—
If men defame us, how much still remains
Unsaid: the most calumniated man
Passes, perchance, for better than he is.
Man cannot judge us, so perplexed a thing
Is each one's life, so warped by circumstance,
So infinite a theme—why, these marauding barons

Have in their hearts, I do not doubt, fair pretexts
And reasons good, why they should rob the poor:
But I will curb them yet, and make them all
One mass of blood and dirt, but I'll subdue them.

Enter the QUEEN, *followed by* CATHARINE *and* EUPHEMIA DOUGLAS.

THE QUEEN.

Decide, my Lord, I pray.

KING JAMES.

How like a woman,
Decide, before I've heard! Well I say "yes."

THE QUEEN.

'Tis not a "yes" or "no" that will do here.
These two fair damsels, look they not demure?
That spiteful dame the Countess Margaret says,
That dame of many eyes, she saw them both
With Richard Cameron and young Lindsay walking
Far in some wood away. Now which loves which?

EUPHEMIA DOUGLAS.

Your Highness does not think I care for either:

Oh no! Her Grace who loves some people more,
Far more, perhaps, than their deserts, she thinks
One must be always loving somebody:
But I—I'm very well without. I pray,
My Liege, set neither of them down to me.
In other climes, if one should walk in woods,
One meets with monkeys—here, sometimes,
with men,
But neither to my taste.

KING JAMES.

That's your defence—
The other culprit with less skill of tongue,
And far more sense of shame, is wisely silent.
Now then the Court decides.
'Tis Effie Douglas that loves Walter Lindsay.
Your moon-struck, studious, meditative, man,
He's apt to like a maid with much of earth in her:
And she—it's mirth to her to sway his wisdom.
The star-led Catharine stoops to Cameron's
wooing;
And hears his biting jests, and smiles, and thinks,
She'd make him different, quite, but as it is
She loves him well—

Now for the sentence: maidens both, attend.
For walking in this wood with two young men,
And for a far worse crime—here justice shudders—
For being caught by Lady Margaret's eyes,
Be married, both of you. There's no appeal.
Now then, we'll take the terrace walk, and think
How this dread sentence may be carried out.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

SCENE IV.

Room in the Palace of Holyrood.

Enter WALTER LINDSAY *and* CATHARINE DOUGLAS.

CATHARINE.

SUCH joy, dear Walter, such you'll never guess,
The Queen knows all—and will befriend our love:
That spiteful Lady Margaret watched us close,
And told the Queen we walked in Scaurfell woods,
And then Her Grace with many merry jibes,

But yet with such a show of sister love
As made my heart o'erflow, heard all from me.
She is our friend: there's no more fear. I feel
A dancing joy that will not let me think,
As if the air were full of motes of gladness,
And sweet confusion every where around.
Now, Walter mine, for her dear sake you'll love
The King, though to my suit you were so churlish.
Often of late a horrid thought invades me;
I fancy you're in league to thwart the King,
Seeking to make the Parliament perverse;
And driving every adverse cloud against him.
Oh say it is not so: but scarce an hour
Of aught like happiness I've known, since last
I saw you with that Grahame, now an outlaw.

LINDSAY.

If justly so, it were, indeed, disgrace,
But as it is—

CATHARINE.

Well, well, we'll not dispute,
Only you'll be again my own dear Walter,
And I will school you yet to bear with those

I love, and those you love I'll dote upon them.
Nay if you come to love another Catharine,
And should desert me—I'll not hate her—much.
For that she's loved by you. Ah now you smile.
The Queen too says that on our marriage day—
But I am bold to talk of marriage days;
And you so grave and so— [*She weeps.*
Not say a word.

Enter EUPHEMIA DOUGLAS.

EUPHEMIA DOUGLAS.

Come, Catharine dear, the Queen is calling you.

CATHARINE DOUGLAS.

Not say a word. [*Lindsay kisses her.*

LINDSAY.

I love thee more than words.

[*Exeunt Catharine and Euphemia Douglas.*

I will not marry her—
I could not make her partner of this soul,
Where one fell purpose sits in solemn state,
Engirt with ministering thoughts of blood,
Like some huge idol face that does not speak,

Or move, but must be ever fed with victims:
A purpose that would shrivel up her soul,
And make her turn with loathing shudder from
me.
But when all Scotland sounds a song of praise,
When magnates claim a part in this great deed,
And when, for this is first, when truth breathes
freely,
And men may tell their thoughts of God and
Heaven,
Devoid of fear—and many years have passed—
Why then she may not loathe me—utterly.
'Tis well that I foresaw not this calamity,
The loss of her: for else I might have swerved,
And love had lost me life—the life of life,
The truth of life, the deed I'm sent to do.
This I fulfil: but I, myself, am wretched.
I may surround myself with noble thoughts,
But not with love—that is for ever lost
To me—a path with glory on before—
But no companion—none to cheer one's weariness,
And play around one when one's sad at heart,
No atmosphere of love, which far away,

And when one walks the mountain path alone,
Is still a hope, a joy, a sustenance.
The weary shepherd toiling o'er the moor,
Oft thinks upon his cheerful fire, and then
The warmer heart that's beating there for him,
Thinks how he's looked for, longed for, watched
for, there,
And then he strides a stouter step amidst
Th' absorbing, dank, morass—for love upholds
him.
I will not look upon't. Avaunt all joy,
All love—all hope—I will not see her more.

[*Exit.*

SCENE V.

Room in a House in Edinburgh.

Enter SIR ROBERT GRAHAME—*afterwards* CHRISTOPHER *and* THOMAS CHAMBERS—*then* SIR JOHN HALL *and* SIR ROBERT STEWART.

SIR JOHN HALL.

WE'RE all here now except that Walter Lindsay.

THOMAS CHAMBERS.

I do not like his absence.

CHRISTOPHER CHAMBERS.

He flutters round the court; and dotes, they say,
On that pale maid of honour, Catharine Douglas.
Why he's not here I cannot think.

THOMAS CHAMBERS.

This comes of trusting boys.

[*A knock at the door. The conspirators, all but Grahame, draw their swords.*

Enter WALTER LINDSAY.

SIR ROBERT GRAHAME.

You look surprised. Our friends began to think
The king himself was coming to our counsels,
And drew their swords in token of that honour:
That's all. But come, let's speak of graver matter.
What are your thoughts, my friends?

SIR JOHN HALL.

I am for treating with the Earl of Douglas:
His discontent is known.

SIR ROBERT GRAHAME.

But if he knew
Our plot, he'd soon enough be friends with
James—
The price our heads—No, I'll not trust the
Douglas.

THOMAS CHAMBERS.

Suppose we raise our banner in the North.
No predatory war—but solely bent
Against the King himself.

SIR ROBERT GRAHAME.

Thrice he has been
Successful there. The omen's strong against us.

CHRISTOPHER CHAMBERS.

There is a terrace walk at Holyrood
Almost enclosed by walls of thickset yew—
Which he delights in much—seldom a day
But he is there—alone. We might, I think,
Come down upon him.

SIR ROBERT GRAHAME.

I've thought of it, but no:
The palace walls are near—he's bold of hand—
Might keep us all at bay, till more appeared.
Besides we're not with friends at Edinburgh.
But what say you?

[*He turns to Sir Robert Stewart and Walter Lindsay.*

WALTER LINDSAY.

All furtive methods seem to soil our cause,
My friends. If it might be with any hope,
I am for open war.

SIR ROBERT STEWART.

And so am I.
I think he'd find some men had stoutness in them
He did not dream of, quite.

SIR ROBERT GRAHAME.

And so am I:
I am for open war, but well I know
'Twould be a useless waste of noblest lives;
And end in heavier fetters. James once gone,
We'll fight the rest in any way you please.
But while he lives, the halo of success
Which sits on him—the terror of his name—
Are armies in themselves. We cannot meet
them.
Now for these furtive methods as you call them.
It's but a fancied thing—we peril all,
We give our lives, in the one case, to no end;
In the other for our country's good—but we—
We six—we have not quite so fine a name,
Unless we peril thousands hopelessly.
Now hear my plan. To Perth the King proceeds
To keep his Christmas there at the Dominicans.
And there we'll keep it too—
We're near the Highlands there: we've many
friends:
Our flight from thence, when it is done, is easy.
Three hundred Caterans, who'll do my will,

Whate'er it be, are near to Perth in readiness,
And they'll o'erpower all guards. Say then, my friends,
Think you with me: is this your counsel?

[*All the conspirators except Lindsay, cry "yes, yes."*

SIR ROBERT GRAHAME [*to Lindsay*].

I think with you, my friend; but these affairs
Do not admit such nicety. They spurn
The rules of trivial casuists. Say then
Will you take part with us?

LINDSAY.

I will.

SIR ROBERT GRAHAME.

'Tis said,
And said like Walter Lindsay. Ho, for Perth.
Perth that shall fairer be in Scotland's history
For this day's work. At Perth, next week, I'll meet
You all again—near to the Convent gate.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

SCENE VI.

A road leading to Queensferry on the Frith of Forth.

Enter KING JAMES, *the* QUEEN, CATHARINE DOUGLAS, EUPHEMIA DOUGLAS, SIR ROBERT STEWART, *and several Lords and Ladies, with a numerous retinue.*

MAULD *steps forward from a wood, dressed as a Divineress.*

MAULD.

HASTE, haste, a greater King awaits your coming—
King Death—cross but that flood, and never more
Shall you return alive—He beckons you.
There, there, his skinny hand!

KING JAMES.

A fearful-looking crone: if all these woods
Have such inhabitants, it is not strange
That peasants' fears should people them with horrors.

Go, speak to her, Sir Robert, hear her story.

[*The King moves on, and then stands gazing at the water.*

SIR ROBERT STEWART.

What means this rude encounter, woman?

MAULD.

There is a plot against the King.

[*Sir Robert Stewart starts back.*

SIR ROBERT STEWART.

A plot!

Who filled your head with these detested dreams?

MAULD.

It came—

By night it came to me: and, like a voice
From out the water, shrieked the death of James,
By many wounds.

SIR ROBERT STEWART.

Naught else? no earthly voice?

MAULD.

No, none. What need of earthly voice?

SIR ROBERT STEWART.

Away,

Bring not these follies to the King.

MAULD.

The Grahame's nearer than you think.

SIR ROBERT STEWART.

Away.

I'll have thee scourged. Avaunt.

[*Mauld withdraws into the wood: Sir Robert returns to the King.*

SIR ROBERT STEWART.

The woman's drunk, or mad, my Liege.

KING JAMES.

What woman? Ah, the weird crone. Since then
My thoughts have been on other things. This
Frith—
Why bare of what's the glory of all seas,
The life that's borne upon them—in its stead
A meaningless expanse—an empty face?
The English, frugal husbandmen, they leave
No sea unploughed that's near their coasts, but we,
We narrow in our empire to the land,
And that we mostly till with blood—
Well, but this woman, what said she?

SIR ROBERT STEWART.

Oh some wild stuff, of dreams, and shrieks, and voices.
But prophecy's her trade.

KING JAMES.

And fitly then she prophesies disaster.
That's the safe course. As for your dreâms, that they
Are not more oft fulfilled 's my only wonder.
That those two threads, our lives by day and night,
Spinning themselves upon the self-same stuff,
Should intersect sometimes is not so strange.

EUPHEMIA DOUGLAS.

Well I have read some poet's song, my Liege,
Made by a king, they said, in which the dreams
Were all in all.

KING JAMES.

Ah, but your poetry
Is quite another thing. It's not like life,
By day or night. In poets' life, all maids
Are gentle, soft, and tender as the morn.

No Effie Douglasses are there—But come.
We shall not be at Perth to-night.

THE QUEEN.

Did not the woman mention Grahame's name?
Methought I caught the word.

SIR ROBERT STEWART.

Yes, yes, she did. All know his enmity,
And that the king has set a price upon him.
It was the very name prophetic skill,
Like hers, would surely play upon.

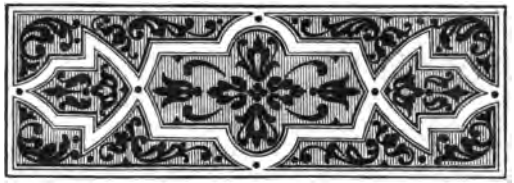
KING JAMES.

Stewart is right. Come now, fair dames.

THE QUEEN.

I would have questioned further though.

[*Exeunt, with military music.*



ACT V. Scene I.

Garden of the Dominican Monastery at Perth. Walter Lindsay *passes over the stage.*

Enter Catharine Douglas.

CATHARINE DOUGLAS.

HE passed this way and must come hither back,
How stealthily he moved: oh how unlike
My Walter's step—he's altogether changed,
And e'en his countenance is no more Walter's.
Each day my mind misgives me more and more—
It all converges to one fatal point,
Something I would not whisper to myself,
And yet the horrid thought is ever by me.

Enter WALTER LINDSAY.

Walter, I did not know you were in Perth,

LINDSAY.

Well, fairest Catharine.

CATHARINE DOUGLAS.

Call me not "fairest Catharine,"
Tell me you will not love me any more,
Say you have won my love, and thrown it off,
And then repeat the jest midst youths who'll mock
The silly maiden as she passes by them.
But do not speak to me in words of compliment,
In miserable phrase of common-place,
Such as you'd greet the next new-comer with:
It's ice upon the heart.

LINDSAY.

Well, dearest Catharine.

CATHARINE DOUGLAS.

'Tis not a change of words alone I want.
The darkest fears are come upon my soul,
And you must hear and soothe them, or I die.
Your gloomy thoughts; your communings with Grahame—

Twice have I seen you with that dangerous man—
Your hatred 'gainst the King; your change to me;
The very way in which you stole along
Just now—but why enumerate to you?
Your every deed, look, word, all point one way—
One way of blood; and that against your sovereign.
Walter, you loved me once: I am the first
You said you ever loved. If it is gone,
Its leafless memory is something still
To implore you by—then by that love, by all
[*She kneels to him.*
You ever loved, forsake your cruel purposes,
Draw back from blood. What you, so delicate,
So nice in honour—you leagued with outcast traitors,
A lurking, murderous, set: for such they are.
Befriend me, Heaven, I have not words to move him.
Let my choked utterance—

LINDSAY.

Rise, Catharine, rise.
Well might they jeer at court at your enthusiasm.

But this surpasses all—
Say that I hate the King—and that I do:
Say that I'm sad, and brood o'er Crawar's death,
And o'er the slavery of heart and tongue
This bigot loves: say that I'm changed to thee;
And if I am, 'tis that my love has grown
A far more yearning, heartsick, deeper, love,
And has forgotten all its former prattling;
As one who parts and is too sad to speak,
Too wretched far for sighs, and tears, and sobbings,
Who dares not to look back—yes, say I'm changed:
Must it be treason that you would accuse me of?
For such a name I ween you'd give the thing—
Maiden, your thoughts run fast.

CATHARINE DOUGLAS.

Oh, dearest Walter,
All know your eloquence, and I the most,
But now it only tells the other way.
Say but these words "I will not harm the King—"
Henceforth I'd never dare to question you:
Walk by your side and never ask you whither,
All ways the same to me, but that which you

Shall choose for both of us.

LINDSAY.

No more—no more.
I will not say it—here comes the King himself.
Let him not hear your raving words. Beware—
He will interpret them to the uttermost,
And wring my blood from out your phantasies.

[*Exit Walter Lindsay.*

CATHARINE DOUGLAS.

Oh, God, be with me now! I stand alone:
A poor, weak, girl, with all this weight upon me.
To see him led to death, and all my doing,
That head borne on with cruel, mocking, shouts,
Which oft in maiden dreams of perfect love
I've pillowed on this breast, and hushed to slumber—
He's more my own now that he's lost to me,
For ever lost. But what's on the other side?
The spectre of a King destroyed by treachery—
A Kingdom torn—not two fond lovers lost,
But thousands yet unborn all gibbering round me:
They shall be heard, although my heart be rent.
Nay, Walter, smile not on me thus—Avaunt—

I will not look—Back—back, thou death-like thing! [*She screams.*

Enter KING JAMES.

KING JAMES.

Here's the heroic Catharine again:
In tragedy I vow. The girl is ill.
How cold, how pale you look, what ails thee, maiden?

CATHARINE DOUGLAS.

Nothing—but I bethought me of a realm
Widowed by bloody hands of its great King,
And wild confusion found in every eye,
Terror, and treachery, and rapine bold,
All stalking through the land, and no man then
Who dares to question them. I thought of this,
And shrieked in horror.

KING JAMES.

What means it all?
You are not wont to deal in mysteries:
Be plain.

CATHARINE DOUGLAS.

A plot against your life, my Liege.

KING JAMES.

I do not doubt—there mostly is—what then?
There is a plot against the lives of all men.
A plot of winds, and waves, and fierce wild beasts,
And, as a King, I must expect to have,
More than the rest, of fiercest animals
Who seek my life—and daily plot against me.
Come, come, be calm. Let's hear about the plot.

CATHARINE DOUGLAS.

You know, my Liege, a youth that came to Court,
Not three years hence, young Cameron's bosom friend.

KING JAMES.

Lindsay, the youth we said was Effie's lover;
But she loves none of us.

CATHARINE DOUGLAS.

The same, my gracious Liege,
He is a dangerous man, methinks; at least
He's much misled.

[*She leans against a marble statue.*

KING JAMES.

You look as pale as that.

This Lindsay then, he has been prating treason,
And scared thy simple wits, that's what you mean:
Take heart, my gentle girl, I'm not an ingrate,
I thank thee for thy loving loyalty,
But as for all this talk, it matters not,
The youths will vapour thus, a cry caught up
From older mouths, the fashion of the day:
I heed it not. This youth had more in him,
I thought, than thus to follow with the pack.
Well then, he talked.

CATHARINE DOUGLAS.

It's more than talk, my Liege,
He's not a man to catch the vapouring ways
Of other men. Oh would to Heaven it were so.
But twice I've seen him with that banished
Grahame;
And once since he was made an outlaw.

KING JAMES.

There's more in that. You're sure that it was
Grahame?

CATHARINE DOUGLAS.

I'm sure. I'm all too sure of all I've said:

But oh, my Liege, I prythee spare his life,
Let me implore—

KING JAMES.

No, maiden, hope it not,
Never shall it be said I made the law
A higgling, peddling, thing of sale and barter.
What he has done, he surely answers for.
The youth is not in Perth: he came not with us:
I'll write to Livingston.

CATHARINE DOUGLAS.

He is in Perth.

KING JAMES.

I'll have him seized.

[*Lindsay passes at the end of the avenue.*

That man far off is like him.

CATHARINE DOUGLAS.

No, no, he is not there. That was not like him.

KING JAMES.

Nay do not tremble so. I pity thee,
I know 'tis misery to thy tender heart
To speak against the youth: but worse to hide
His guilt, if guilt it be.
Thy lover, Cameron, he does not know it?

CATHARINE DOUGLAS.

I ne'er heard Cameron say aught, my Liege,
That looked like treason to your Highness.

KING JAMES.

Come then. We hope 'twill be our gayest night
To-night. Alan a Perth has just now come.
Well, you would rather stay and court the
breeze,
And let it calm those swelling temples down.
The king will not forget thy loyalty
This day, fair maid. Not that I looked for less.
Thy father's truth is shown again in thee.

[*He takes her hand and kisses it. Exit King James.*

CATHARINE DOUGLAS.

One death upon one sword—it were not much:
But every word a death—no comfort here—
None in the grave—with cold and glazed eyes
He'll look me back, and say I did it all,
I drank his blood, I, I, who love him madly.

[*Exit Catharine Douglas.*

SCENE II.

A Street in Perth.

Enter SIR ROBERT GRAHAME *and* WALTER LINDSAY.

GRAHAME.

YES, but of late you've looked so sad,
A silent look of sullen apprehension,
An ominous concern—

LINDSAY.

When sick at heart
Of upper air, the gloomy river dives,
Wending its lonesome way through earth's dark meads,
Think not it, therefore, flows with feebler stream,
Or changes in the least its course.

GRAHAME.

Talk not to me in tropes—the King's a poet:
I hate the race of them. But are you with us?

With us in heart, in hand, in stern resolve;
The Walter Lindsay that you were?

LINDSAY.

I am:
Question me not again. I've just been there,
And measured well the moat.

GRAHAME.

Stewart will see there are no bolts to stop us:
Still, Chamberlain!
The rooms lie so—the King's apartment there,
The eastern angle of the monastery,
And next an outer room, and then the passage,
The great hall opens there. We cannot miss it.
Our Highland friends are entering now the town;
By ones and twos, and different ways, they come.
I think he's in the toils: my heart beats joyfully,
As if it were already done—
At ten we meet. Look to that Chambers well:
As it comes near, it seems too great a gain—
I feel suspicious of the very air
For fear it whisper aught in some quick ear,
And snatch the prey already in our fangs.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

Room in the Dominican Monastery at Perth.

Enter KING JAMES, *with a paper in his hand; and* CHRISTOPHER CHAMBERS.

KING JAMES.

THIS is well done indeed:
Think not because you served our uncle Albany,
That we must needs look cold on your deserts.
Merit with us is clanship, aye and more.
See that it's sent to-morrow to the Council.
I've signed it there. [*Exit King James.*

CHRISTOPHER CHAMBERS.

"To-morrow to the Council."
To-morrow is no word for thee. My tongue
Strove hard to tell him so, but could not do it.
Often before I've felt a yearning here,
A sudden, rushing, yearning at my heart,
To throw me at his feet, and tell him all.

" Merit with us is clanship, aye and more."
This is the man that I am leagued to kill.
To serve so great a King—and have one's services
Well known—and then to hoist up in his stead
This empty, gaudy-feathered, chamberlain.
Fool, fool, fool that I am, benighted fool:
But I'll undo it yet.

[*Exit Christopher Chambers.*

SCENE IV.

Great Hall in the Dominican Monastery at Perth.

Enter the Lords and Ladies of the Court, afterwards the KING *and* QUEEN *and their Attendants.*

KING JAMES.

COME hither, Stewart. [*aside.*
Give orders straight that Walter Lindsay should be seized,
And brought before us early on the morrow.

The youth talks treasonable stuff, I hear;
And, what concerns us more, consorts with
Grahame.

STEWART.

Indeed, my Liege! I'll see to it forthwith.
[*Sir Robert Stewart moves away.*

KING JAMES.

'Tis an old saying and a good one too,
The mavis sings his sweetest song at home,
In his own woods: so Alan, here, at Perth,
Will charm us more than e'en at Holyrood.
Let's show the rapt and listening atmosphere
That we can be as silent as itself,
Naught to be heard but what the minstrel loves,
That sweet, unconscious, murmuring, under-
breath,
Which fears to interrupt the song, but yet
Must utterance find for its intense delight.
Alan, you smile; but well I ween a sound
Like that ne'er vexed a minstrel's ear.

[*Alan a Perth sings.*]

When hope and joy have made me blest,
When she I love, in some lone dell,
Hiding her head upon my breast,
Half-whispering owns she loves me well:
Then, as I go, I'll gaze upon the west,
And watch the glowing sun go down to rest;
A lover lingering on the western groves,
Full loth to leave the earthly nymph he loves.

When prison walls enclose me quite,
And long duresse my fate appears;
When changeless day succeeds long night,
A dreary, lengthening, chain of years:
Then, warder, let me gaze upon the west,
And watch the troubled sun go down to rest;
A sad-eyed King with frowning guards borne on,
Defeated, wounded, and his kingdom gone.

When life's dark sands have run so low,
That men may count what few remain;
When my rapt soul is fain to go,
And when to breathe is toil and pain:
Turn me once more, O turn me, to the west,
And let me see the sun go down to rest;
A weary wanderer homeward bound at last,
But softly, sadly, smiling on the past.

KING JAMES.

Said I not well; and has not Alan sung
His sweetest song at Perth? It touched us more
Than we should care to tell: bringing a sound
Of long past years, and long forgotten memories,
A sound as of the sea first heard in childhood,
In music different from all other waters.
You smile again.

ALAN A PERTH.

Oh would, my Liege, that humble Alan
Could charm you thus. 'Tis but a stolen light
Ta'en from the sun. The words and melody
Are writ by one King James, the Prince of bards:
In boyhood writ, they say.

[*The Courtiers laugh.*

KING JAMES.

How could you fool me so?—a courtier's trick—
But they're not mine. Sing o'er the last again.

[*Alan a Perth sings the last stanza again.*

I fear 'tis true—something like this I wrote
In early days. It seems that manhood's cares
May scribble o'er the brain till they efface

The earlier, happier, records written there.
Not that the strain's a joyous one—
What says the fair Euphemia's wicked wit?
It must be carping at me.

EUPHEMIA DOUGLAS.

Oh no, my Liege, I don't say anything,
And think much less; but Richard Cameron here,
You know his love for gibes, he thinks, I'm sure,
Sprinkle the gosling with a few swan's feathers,
And straight the mother goose will swear that 'tis
The noblest swan that ever breasted water.
But that's what Richard Cameron thinks, not I.

KING JAMES.

I wish you two would marry—
Instead of being at cross purposes,
And thus defrauding us of due revenge.
No other punishment would be sufficient—
Alan, you see how truthful is my praise,
'Tis like that this old song of mine should please me,
Whate'er the merits of the thing itself:

'Tis what clung round it in my heart that made
It dear to me—Where is the King of Love?
[*A young Knight steps forward.*
Let me regain my laurels if I can
At chess with you—strange that the "King of Love"
Should be so potent with these little figures,
The very demons of contentiousness.
There's meaning in it, much that the witty Cameron
Might moralize upon. Disport yourselves;
We mean to engage in single, deadly, feud:
Two Kings—and, by the way, old wives declare
That one great King must die this year in Scotland,—
Look to't, Sir King of Love. We'll give no quarter. [*They commence playing.*

THE EARL OF MAR [*to the Queen*].

Wil't please your Highness dance?

THE QUEEN.

Thank you, my Lord,
I'd rather watch the game.

CAMERON [*aside*].

I do not think
She knows the way in which these things are moved.
Bishops might hop like knights, and she'd not see
Aught uncanonical in their proceedings:
It's only to look on at him.

[*He turns to Euphemia Douglas.*

Well, Effie,
Certes, you are the boldest girl I know:
How dared you tell that goose and gosling story,
And father it on me?

EUPHEMIA DOUGLAS.

The King's not like
You subject wits; he bears a jest himself,
Nay, revels in it, showing as great in that
As in all else.

CAMERON.

You're all in love with him.
Why should not you look on too with the Queen?
See how she scans those bits of ivory,
Looking as if she understood it all.
Now, does she know a castle from a pawn?

EUPHEMIA DOUGLAS.

She might, perhaps, if the King ever told her.
You think it much to watch that tedious game,
And all for love. We listen to your talk,
Your tiresome talk, endure your sullenness—
Watch you when sick—in short a thousand things
We undergo more tedious far than that.
It's nothing for a woman.

CAMERON.

Well done, she-trumpeter, you sound indeed
A gallant strain in favour of your sex.
But look at Catharine there, how woe-begone!

EUPHEMIA DOUGLAS.

Most wretched has she been of late, and worse
To-day than ever. I dare not speak to her,
The tones of kindness always make her weep.
There's something deadly wrong between the lovers.
He is not here—

CAMERON.

It's not a lover's quarrel,
For in those things, with all the pettishness,

You mostly see a lurking look that says
" How I will love when I do love again !"
A sort of pretty kitten-play with strife,
But this is deeper far. I'll seek him out.
To me too he has been reserved of late ;
Avoiding intercourse, and when met, silent.

Enter CHRISTOPHER CHAMBERS.

CHRISTOPHER CHAMBERS [*aside*].

One word is safety,
Would he but listen to one little word.
There is no time to think, no time to act,
But death on every side is staring at me.
I'm hurrying onwards to a precipice
And cannot turn, as in a dream—
Oh I shall shriek it out—but no, not that—
They'll deem me mad, and hurry me away.

[*He moves towards the King: Cameron catches him by the arm.*

CAMERON.

What is the grave official thinking of,
Of this, and that, and reasons for a thing,
Of multifold dispatches to the south,

And all the trick of state?

CHRISTOPHER CHAMBERS.

Here let me pass.

CAMERON.

Effie, I thought these penmen ne'er went daft.
I thought the inky current of their souls
Did ne'er o'erflow its banks.

[*Christopher Chambers touches the King.*

CHRISTOPHER CHAMBERS.

My Liege.

KING JAMES.

Well, Sir, we're not at leisure now.
Go to—

[*Sir Robert Stewart seizes Chambers by the arm, and leads him away.*

SIR ROBERT STEWART [*aside*].

What meant that move? my dagger in thy heart
If that thou stirr'st one step.

CHRISTOPHER CHAMBERS.

I did not mean—
I only went to overlook the game.

SIR ROBERT STEWART.

I did not know thou wert so fond of games.

Away! and join the rest.

[*Exit Christopher Chambers.*

CAMERON [*to Euphemia Douglas*].

So then the Chamberlain can frown—That's
something.
Methought his life was only smiles and bows,
And simpering nods. Why, when he grasped
his dagger,
There was the Stewart look with all its fire.
One never knows a man—then, to be sure,
It was no light offence for that dull scribe
To interrupt a King at chess.

Enter an Usher.

USHER.

There is a Highland woman at the gate,
My Liege, who prays one minute's audience.
She speaks of instant danger to your Highness,
So earnestly, we could not drive her back.

KING JAMES.

My Queen's in danger, man: talk not to me
Of Highland women now. What is her garb?

USHER.

She seems a weird divineress, my Liege,

KING JAMES.

I thought so,
'Tis Stewart's friend. Stewart, the Highland woman
We met just near the Frith of Forth, your friend,
Is come to Court.

SIR ROBERT STEWART.

She's quite insane, my Liege,

CAMERON.

No doubt, mad people whisk about a Court,
Like moths about a flame.

KING JAMES.

Say then to-morrow I will see the woman—
No—not another word.

SIR ROBERT STEWART [*to the Earl of Athol*].

Will't never end? From pitfall into pitfall
We stumble in, and stumble out.

CAMERON.

Now these mad people come to oust the fools—
Mad, mad, indeed.

THE QUEEN [*turning to the Earl of Athol*].

Look, uncle, look: the King has won.

KING JAMES.

How should you know?

THE QUEEN.

I saw it in your eyes,
Before you moved.

KING JAMES.

Rest you, Sir King, you've had your victories
For many days. You must not grudge me one.
[*The King rises.*
Bring me the parting cup. I drink right heartily
To all your healths and to your slumbers light.
May each now dream of that which each likes best,
And may the coming day continue on
The happy dream.

[*Exit the King and all the Courtiers, except the Earl of Athol and Sir Robert Stewart.*

SIR ROBERT STEWART.

We must not lose a moment's time, my Lord,
They may observe the bolts—Grahame is here.

[*Exeunt the Earl of Athol and Sir Robert Stewart.*

SCENE V.

Ante-room to the King's Bed-room.

The KING *in an undress robe, the* QUEEN, CATHARINE DOUGLAS *and* EUPHEMIA DOUGLAS. *They are standing before the fire.*

KING JAMES.

YES, he sang well, but 'twas a tricksy jest,
I saw him smile before he 'gan to sing,
You may be sure 'twas Mistress Effie's prompting.
Well, well, a feast is a good thing enough,
And the end of a feast is a good thing too:
That happy time when youths and maids recount
Each bit by bit the little incidents
That had so much of loving meaning in them.
And, by my troth, if I were you, fair Catharine,
I'd tear her treacherous eyes out instantly,
She kept your lover in her net of jests
The whole night long.

THE QUEEN.

Nay, Catharine sweet,
What makes you look so wondrous sad to-night?

KING JAMES.

Her lover's friend is not her King's—Take heart.
This Lindsay may not prove a traitor yet.

THE QUEEN.

Lindsay her lover's friend! Why Lindsay is,
Himself, her lover, dear.

KING JAMES.

What, Walter Lindsay?

[*The Queen makes a sign of Assent.*

My poor dear girl, well may she look thus pale.
What boundless agony it must have been
To speak to me as you have done this morn:
Your lover still?

CATHARINE DOUGLAS.

He's mine no more.

THE QUEEN.

Hush, hush, what noise is that?
A clang of swords. Nearer it comes—and lights—

There, gleaming there, I see them on the water.

KING JAMES.

There's treason here—secure the bolts—what none?
Dupe that I am—'Tis Grahame.

[*The King rushes to the window.*

Curse them, all clenched outside, the wary villains!

[*He endeavours to force the bars. Meanwhile Euphemia Douglas supports the Queen.*

CATHARINE DOUGLAS.

It will not stay them much, this woman's arm,
This willow wand; would that it were of oak.

[*She puts her arm in the staples of the door.*

Oh God, support me now.

[*The Conspirators rush against the door.*

Oh agony!

[*They force open the door, and enter over Catharine Douglas's body.*

SIR ROBERT GRAHAME.

Now, tyrant, die: and would that thou could'st die
One half the deaths thou'st caused.

KING JAMES.

Let me but have a priest to shrive me.

SIR ROBERT GRAHAME.

No. None.

Confess upon this sword.

[*The conspirators attack the King. He falls. The Queen interposes herself, is wounded, and thrust aside, fainting. They dispatch the King: and all, but Lindsay, leave the apartment.*

WALTER LINDSAY.

Say but one word; nay if it be to curse me,
Speak once again—this lovely arm which erst
The rudest winds played round with tenderness,
Awed by the magic of its symmetry,
Now mangled thus by me who loved it so.
I have the joy of Jephtha in my deed,
Spilling my own heart's blood upon the altar,
Would that it were! She's gone, heroic, perfect, creature!

[*The King's servants enter and attack Lindsay, who falls mortally wounded.*

LINDSAY.

Yes, better so—she does not breathe? there, there,

There by her side, now drag me there—
together— [*Lindsay dies.*

THE QUEEN [*rising slowly*].

All hushed—then they are gone—where is he
now? [*She sees the body.*
What that, there is no life in that—no life—
My Lord, my own dear Lord, so cold a hand
To one who loves thee thus—so dull an eye—
Aha 'tis death! I know thee now, fell thing.
And this base body swerving from the steel,
It could not save my Lord. [*She stands up.*
What are you gazing at?
Go, fellow, go; thy master loved thee well:
Go, all of you. I'll live no more, myself,
But as the avenging spectre to those wretches.
Why rooted there? Ride like the wind, I say,
When lightning-spurred it sweeps across the
plain,
Swift as revenge itself—
It moved—no, no, it did not move.

AN ATTENDANT.

Your Highness bleeds.

THE QUEEN.

The King has bled his life away, and yet
You stand like stocks. I'll go myself. To horse!
Ah no, I cannot leave thee e'en in death:
Oh let me clasp thee in my loving arms,
One such embrace as when before the wars
I strained thee to my heart, and lived on that
Till thy return. Now then, to arms, to arms!
Ride deep in blood—there, there—the accursed
Grahame.
But stay, what mist is this? here bear me up.
Would that it were but death. Oh, sweetest
death,
Leave me not widowed here.

[*The Queen swoons away. The curtain falls.*

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